Multimedia CD-ROM Edutainment Mac Games

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Electronic Entertainment™

AMERICA'S #1 MULTIMEDIA ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

Doom Killers?

Doom II, System Shock, and 17 Others Battle to Dethrone Doom

78 Sizzling Software Gifts

Blind Dating On the 'Net

Plus: 38 Multimedia & Game Reviews

An IDG Communications Publication

December 1994
$5.95 Canada $6.95

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Microsoft
Space
Simulator
NASA
I'm
wife and
the moon fo

THE FAMILY TOLD ME they wanted to go "someplace new" for the holidays.

"Is a place that has no water, no weather, no atmosphere, temperatures ranging from 261°F to -279°F, and one-sixth the gravity you're accustomed to 'someplace new' enough for you?" I replied.

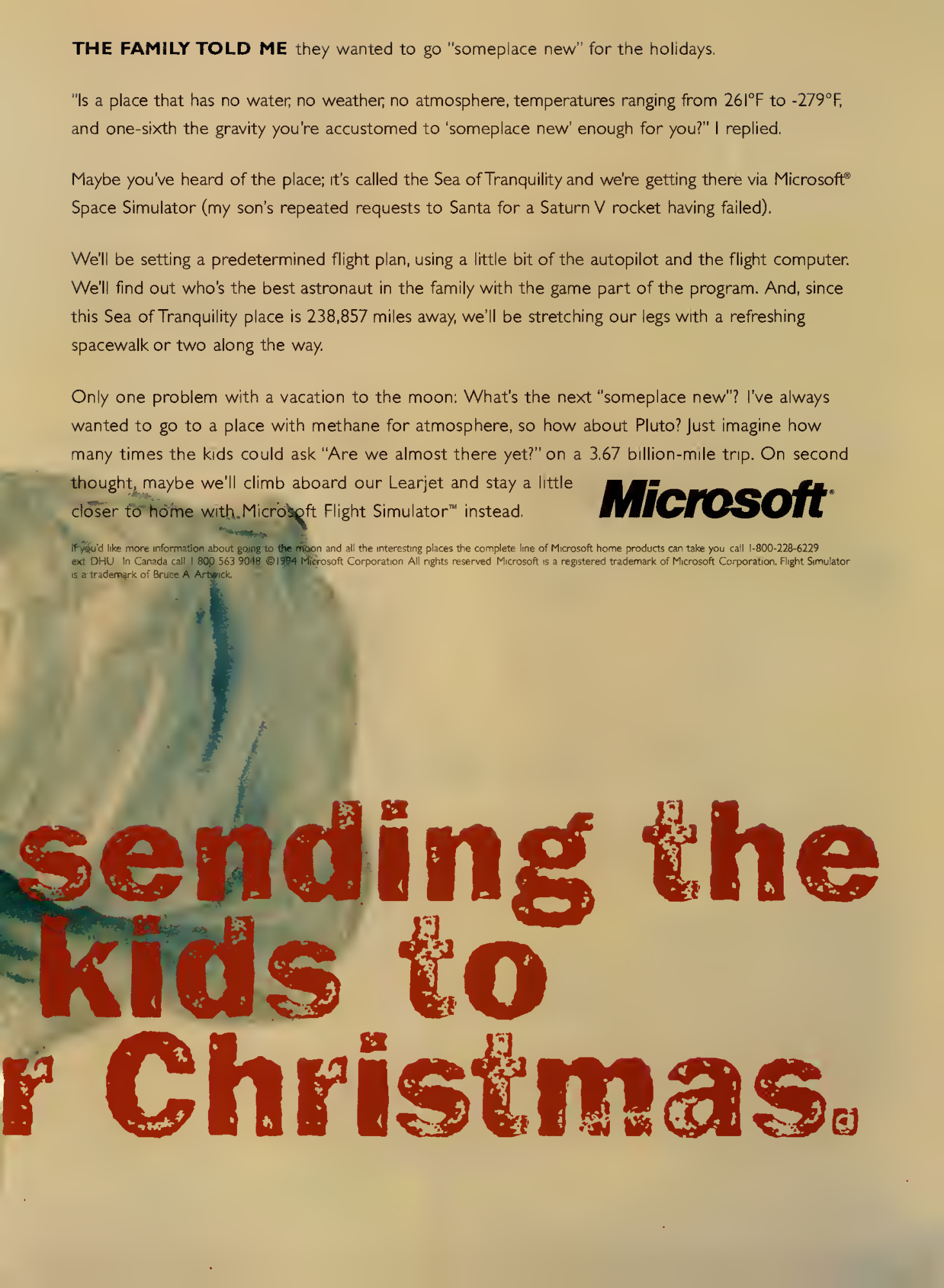
Maybe you've heard of the place; it's called the Sea of Tranquility and we're getting there via Microsoft® Space Simulator (my son's repeated requests to Santa for a Saturn V rocket having failed).

We'll be setting a predetermined flight plan, using a little bit of the autopilot and the flight computer. We'll find out who's the best astronaut in the family with the game part of the program. And, since this Sea of Tranquility place is 238,857 miles away, we'll be stretching our legs with a refreshing spacewalk or two along the way.

Only one problem with a vacation to the moon: What's the next "someplace new"? I've always wanted to go to a place with methane for atmosphere, so how about Pluto? Just imagine how many times the kids could ask "Are we almost there yet?" on a 3.67 billion-mile trip. On second thought, maybe we'll climb aboard our Learjet and stay a little closer to home with Microsoft Flight Simulator™ instead.

Microsoft®

If you'd like more information about going to the moon and all the interesting places the complete line of Microsoft home products can take you call 1-800-228-6229 ext DHU. In Canada call 1 800 563 9048. ©1994 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Flight Simulator is a trademark of Bruce A. Artwick.



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Paul Bonner folds himself into the cockpit as paper airplanes enter the high-tech world of multimedia.

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The success of Doom has spawned dozens of imitators—including (clockwise from the top left) Corridor 7, Dr. Radiaki, Doom II, and Dark Forces. There's even a Barney version of Doom!

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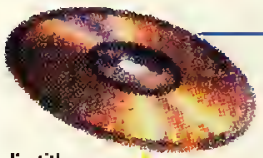
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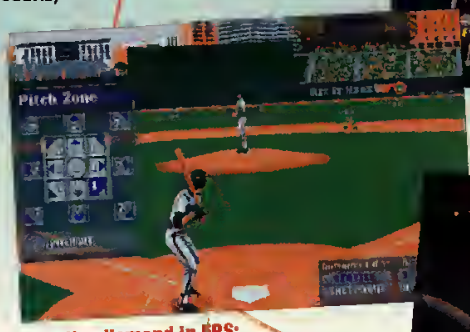
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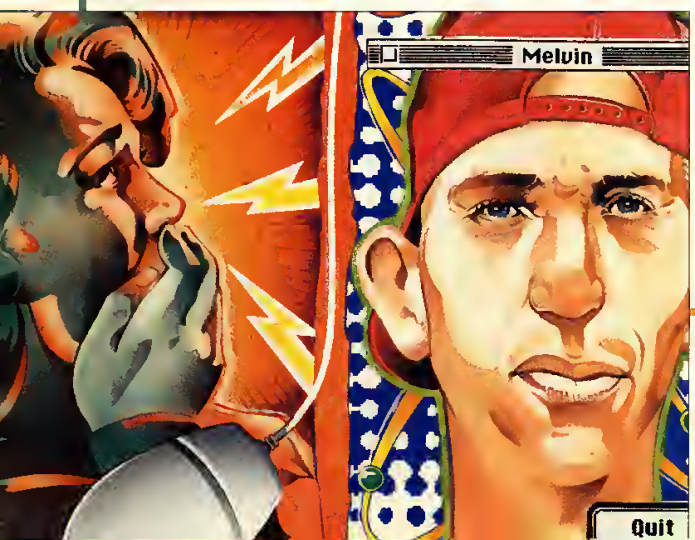
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Millions of people are going online to make their love connections, page 72.



Editor's Page

Fredric Paul

Love Letters

If you listen to some people, you'd think that multimedia will be the death of the written word. According to this view, the sound and fury of multimedia games and information titles are finishing the job statted by television, replacing reading with pointing and clicking, watching and listening.

It's true that the multimedia blast and sizzle of games like Doom and its many imitators ("Natural Born Doom Killers," page 58) or the involved story lines of Wing Commander III (Guided Tour, page 69) can challenge the experience of reading even the most action-packed novel. Similarly, the compelling video and audio clips in Baseball's Greatest Hits (see Spotlight, beginning on page 30) or One Tribe (see Sharp Edge, beginning on page 15) compete with what ttaditional books offer on these subjects.

But even as millions of new PCs and Macs deliver multimedia to the masses, home computers are also sparking a revival in the lost art of writing letters—especially love letters.

Most people think of love letters as a quaint relic of 19th-century drawing-room society. But as news editor James Daly points out in "Love At First Byte" (page 72), the rise of online services and the growth of the Internet have updated the practice for the modern age.

Instant transmission and the ability to connect with many people at once has inspired millions of online writers who might never pen an old-fashioned snail-mail letter. Replacing outmoded Elizabethan conventions with roses (@--}--}-) made of symbols, they meet and chat through the night, spawning virtual romances that often turn into real ones.

Of course, companies large and small are scrambling to pave the Information Superhighway so that 'lectronic Lotharios won't have to settle for mere typed words. Corporate interests want to use TV cable and fiber optics to improve transmissions to carry pictures and sound. It'll be the group equivalent of the long-promised video phones, letting you see and hear whomever is on the other end of the line.

An early move in this direction is the ImagiNation Network, which lets you assemble a picture of yourself to show to your online friends. But as columnist Corey Sandler demonstrates when he ttansforms his online self into a young, nubile blonde female (see Game On, page 50), there's nothing to ensure that you're getting an accurate representation.

Even the most gung-ho proponents of broadband connections have to realize that they're tampering with a successful formula. The millions who type their way into cyberspace know that the limitations of the written word are a big part of online charm. Text-only communication reduces the pressure, ironically allowing people to be more themselves—or at least who they would like to be. Reading a message places the focus on what people say, not who says it.

The bottom line? Computers need multimedia to get their point across. But people are clever enough to communicate with words.

FP

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E²-Mail

Mere Mortals?

Before my interest in video games waned and I became a computer-game player, I always read *GamePro*. Good thing, too, because it introduced me to *Electronic Entertainment*. I really enjoyed your Pentium PC vs. Power Mac feature ("Your Next Game Platform?" September 1994, page 43) and the monitor story that included the Sony Trinitron ("A Closer Look at Monitors," page 102).

Since you're the authority, I have a couple of questions. Will Mortal Kombat II and Super Street Fighter II ever be available for the PC and Mac?

Lyon Barrett
Austin, Texas

I use my computer for three things—games, games, and more games. I am a dedicated fan of Street Fighter II, Mortal Kombat, and Mortal Kombat II. I've spent most of my life savings on the arcade versions and a subscription to your magazine.

I was overjoyed when I heard that Mortal Kombat II was coming out for home systems. That is, until I realized that I don't own a Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis, Sega CD, Game Gear, or Game Boy. Is Mortal Kombat II coming to the PC?

George Lin
Toronto, Canada

Look for Mortal Kombat II and Super Street Fighter II from Hi-Tech Entertainment. Street Fighter I and II will ship on one CD-ROM this month. You'll have to wait a little longer for Mortal Kombat II. —*Ed.*

Lighten Up, Francis

Francis Hickey, who blasted *E²* for reviewing a Packard Bell computer (*E²*-Mail, August 1994, page 6), should go take his hypertension pills. Perhaps he's one of those trendy folks who buy the PC with the "right" label on the box.

Packard Bell designs bang-for-the-buck computers for people who can't spend their entire paychecks on PC hardware. In addition, as your reply suggests, Packard Bell has greatly improved its computers' design and overall quality.

I've owned PC Cadillacs and PC clunkers. Currently, I own a Packard Bell color notebook. It is quick, reliable, compact, and loaded with features. In short, it was the best buy among comparable notebooks.

I hope Mr. Hickey's letter did not misinform readers and that they will continue to glean useful information from your pages. As for Mr. Hickey, I offer him this advice: Lighten up.

Paul Shankland
Address Withheld

Pump Up the Volume

There's been a lot of hoopla about sound cards and speakers lately. In the interest of your readers, I thought I'd pass on an inexpensive remedy for sound woes. I connected the Sound Blaster Pro in my 486 to a $59 amplifier and a pair of $59 seven-inch die-cast speakers, all from Radio Shack.

The amp has excellent sound and a front earphone jack, and it really pumps up the volume for its size. Dollar for dollar, you can't beat this setup for either sound quality or cost.

Glen Dulsky
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

Privateer Paralysis



ILLUSTRATION BY PAMELA HOBBS

First, I would like to say that you publish an excellent magazine.

Now, here are some questions about Privateer. On one particular mission, I have to get by three waves of enemy Retros and escort Hunter Toth to New Oxford. I have no problems destroying the first two, but when the third wave comes I always get blown away. Is there any way you can help me?

Jason Ouellette
Vancouver, Washington

You need a ship upgrade. First, buy a centurion with shield level two, two IR missle launchers, and four Tachyon cannons. Keep afterburning and try taking ships out by ramming them. —*Ed.*

Sound Advice

In response to the letter from Karen Klimas of Aztech Labs (*E²*-Mail, October 1994, page 6) I would like to say good going *E²*.

I know someone who had the same problems mentioned in your review of the Aztech Sound Galaxy DoubleSpeed Multimedia Upgrade Kit ("Do-It-Yourself Multimedia," July 1994, page 108). If Ms. Klimas does not want bad reviews of her company's products, then Aztech Labs should do it right the first time—are you listening, Outpost creators?

Keep the accurate reviews coming. They are the reason I subscribe to your magazine.

James Collins
Buena Park, California

Boys Will Be Boys

Your feature "Why Women Don't Play Computer Games" in the September 1994 issue (page 56) made me wonder why violent shoot-'em ups are so wildly popular with young boys.

Boys have always fantasized about violence. Violent games, either between kids in the street with toy guns or on an arcade screen, provide an emotional outlet. Children get a rush from the fear, excitement, and victory. One negative consequence is that they dissociate violence from its effect—pain.

Parents and adults in general should not try to censor fantasy, but they must make a point to teach reality along with it. Perhaps, after being shown an armless veteran, a child might consider the actual suffering that takes place when someone is harmed in a violent game or television program.

It's up to responsible adults to expose children to reality in an intelligent and honest way while not suppressing their imaginations. Once pure violence is not such a turn-on, they can be introduced to other worlds they have never visited: poetry, painting, ballet, acting, drawing, and writing.

Bill King
Gallup, New Mexico

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, *951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; MCI ID: 619-7340; and CompuServe: 73361, 265.*

IN

SIX

PAGES

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WHY

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The game has audibles, updated NFL rules (like the 2-point conversion), and play options most other games wouldn't even understand. You can play an entire season in the rain, sun and snow, and save all your stats with the battery back-up.



FULL CONTROL OF YOUR RECEIVERS AT THE RELEASE OF THE BALL LETS YOU RUN UNDER THE BOMB OR COME BACK FOR AN UNDERTHROWN PASS.

So if you love passing windows, buy another game.

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-DieHard GameFan

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The players aren't just big. They're huge. And so is the ice surface. So all the action is right in your face.



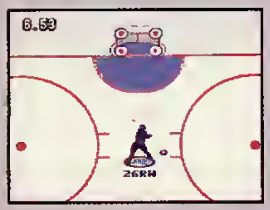
REALISTIC PUCK PHYSICS. THE PUCK FLIPS AND BOUNCES AROUND THE ICE LIKE THE REAL THING

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Most driving games think it's fun racing against nobody, just circling the track and waving to the pit crew. With ESPN Speedworld, you're racing against 23 computer-controlled drivers who would like nothing more than to plow you into a wall. To win this race (or even finish it), you'll need to bump, slot, and draft your way around hairpins, straightaways, and 3-D banked turns. Choose your track, and customize your car for maximum performance–the tires, transmission, engine, and even the paint job (which won't look good for long). Once you're on the track, you'll have to monitor the tire wear, body damage and fuel consumption. And with the interactive pit crew, you can win or lose a race while changing a tire. The battery back-up saves your stats and winnings through an entire season. And don't forget, ESPN's Dr. Jerry Punch will be there for every race, so if you choke on the final lap, he's going to let you know it. Pick up ESPN Speedworld and start racing against the pros. Not against yourself.



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CUSTOMIZE YOUR CAR– THE TIRES, THE ENGINE, THE TRANSMISSION, EVEN THE PAINT JOB.



EARN WINNINGS AND USE THEM TO MAKE YOUR CAR FASTER AND MEANER.



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SHARP EDGE

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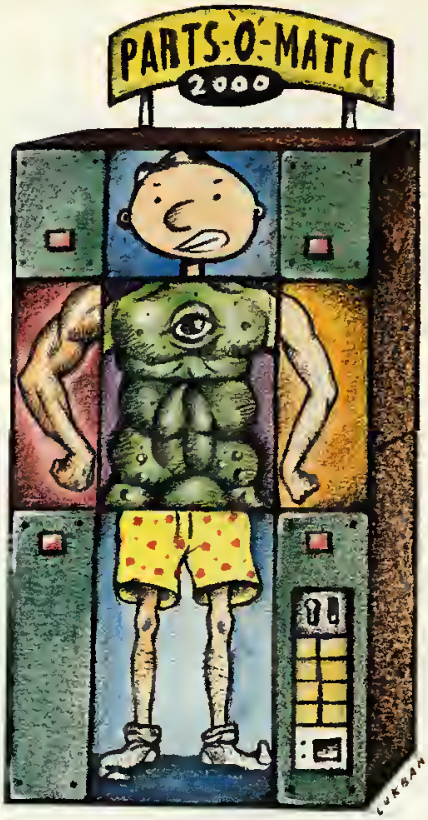


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUKBAN

A little tuck here, a lift there. It will all be virtually yours when you log onto the online service **Enter Television** and construct your own walking, talking 3-D persona.

Although the service won't be around for at least two years, plans are already afoot to create a fantastical world in which text and colorful log-on handles are replaced with meticulously landscaped buildings and chatting cyborgs. Your first stop is the Body Shop, where a new you is created from artfully rendered parts. Using a mouse or joystick, walk down a 3-D–rendered street in a virtual downtown and peek in a showroom. Up for a chat? Talk into your computer's microphone, as you converse in real time with another cyber-persona strolling down the boulevard.

"Let's face it: Given a choice between typing a message and telling someone what you are thinking, you'd much rather communicate with your voice," says Keith Schaefer, chief executive officer at Enter Television in Cupertino, California.

The company plans to keep costs low by selling chunks of electronic real estate to advertisers. (Enter Television; 408-366-6000, not yet priced)

—Bill Meyer

Pepperoni Over the Wire

You know all about the Internet's vast resources–how you can order up information from A to Z. Now you can order dinner too. Get ready for PizzaNet, which the Pizza Hut chain is testing in Santa Cruz, California.



With PizzaNet there's no need to stop 'Net surfing when you get hungry.

Internet users can order a steaming hot pie and soft drinks electronically by using Mosaic software to access the service at http://www.pizzahut.com. Orders go to Pizza Hut headquarters in Wichita, Kansas, then back to the 'Hut nearest you. The company says this order-bouncing technique won't add any more time to your delivery than if you'd called in yourself.

Why order a pizza electronically? If you're online and have only a single phone line, you can satisfy your munchies without logging off.

–Christine Grech

Get Ready For the Slopes



Bone up on your skiing skills before you get anywhere near an icy mountain.

Now that winter is on the way, it's time to get ready for the heady thrill of strapping two highly waxed slats to your feet and hurtling down slippery mountain trails. For a preview of the best the season has in store, glide on over to **Warren Miller's Ski World: Encyclopedia of Skiing** from Electronic Arts. Ski-movie legend Miller gives enthusiasts info on resorts, equipment, techniques, and safety—and plenty of the hot skiing video for which Miller is famous. Interactive video instruction lets you learn to ski at your own pace. Or check out the dramatic crashes. Then you won't have to worry about buying those pricey lift tickets. Look for it this month. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; Win CD/Mac CD, $44.95)

–James Daly

Dragonfly Rides a Speciality

Do your parties poop out early? No longer. With an array of virtual reality installations from **Amusitronix**, your guests will want to stick around your get-togethers until the wee hours.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUKBAN

Amusitronix is taking virtual-reality installations on the road to nightclubs, shopping malls, colleges, museums, trade shows—maybe even your own house.

The company is working on several new VR experiences in which you sit, stand, or hang from various contraptions while wearing a headset that immerses you in real-time 3-D scenes, which are piped in from a PC. During ImmersiTron, for instance, you fly through a tropical rain forest on top of a dragonfly in search of a missing gem. In Virtual Hang Glider, you take to the skies by strapping into a high-tech hang glider. And in CyberCycle, you can hop on a souped-up motorcycle and roar through traffic. Just remember to stock up on chips and beer. (Amusitronix; 718-268-4411; prices start at $500 for an evening's rental) *—Bill Meyer*

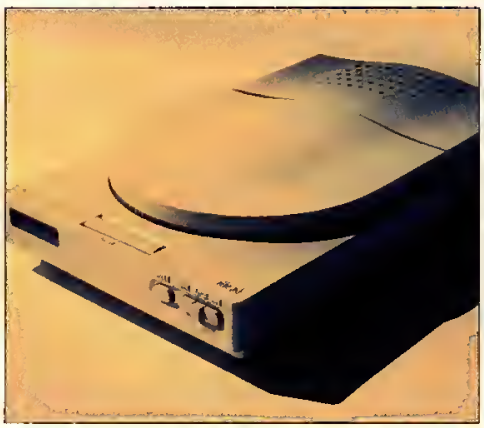
NEC Keeps Things Spinning

NEC's recently revamped line of CD-ROM drives has its eye on two targets: advanced users who demand the best performance and new users who don't want to spend a lot to get in on the CD-ROM game.

Multimedia newbies can have a look at the MultiSpin 2V line of moderate-performance double-speed drives. The drives come in basic PC and Mac models, plus a full-blown Deluxe kit for the PC that includes a Sound Blaster sound card, a pair of games (Myst and SimCity), speakers, and even batteries. Here's the best part: The 2V line starts at less than $200.

If you're willing to spend a bit extra for more speed, consider the MultiSpin 4X line. These four drives range from the triple-speed 3Xp Plus, an external portable with an optional battery pack for mobile multimedia, to the 4X Pro, a screamer with a fast 180-millisecond access time. Street prices start at less than $500.

NEC also throws in a two-year warranty and toll-free technical support. (NEC Technologies; 800-632-4636; PC/Mac, $200 and up) *—Christopher Lindquist*





Travel to the farthest reaches of the globe from the comfort of your PC.

Around the World In 80 Minutes

Usually, one's desire to explore the far corners of the globe has to be balanced by such real-world considerations as "How can I get the time off from work?" and "Who the heck is going to pay for this anyway?" Not for long. Pop in Virgin's upcoming **One Tribe** CD-ROM, and you can sneak into Senegal or dash over to Denmark in the time it takes you to boot up your computer.

MTV veejay Pip Dann serves as One Tribe's wandering host. Travel to the world's most remote locations to witness a day in the life of different peoples and cultures while you learn how geography, weather patterns, and religion shape economic and political foundations. More than 600 maps, 30 minutes of video, and 3,000 photographs fill this stylish global exploration, along with exotic music from Peter Gabriel's Real World Music label.

Look for One Tribe this month for Windows and in mid-1995 for the Mac. (Virgin Sound and Vision; 800-874-4607; Win CD/Mac CD, $69.99)

—James Daly

NEWSFLASH

Apple Computer is making its strongest bid yet for the home market with the release of five new **Macintosh Performas** sporting the fast new **PowerPC** chip. All systems in the new Performa 6100 series include the CPU; a 15-inch color monitor; a keyboard; a CD-ROM drive; 14.4-kbps fax/modem; 8MB of RAM; and a 250MB, 350MB, or 500MB hard drive. Apple is sweetening the deal by throwing in a bundle of multimedia reference titles and educational games, including Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia, the American Heritage Dictionary, Quicken, the 1994 Time Almanac, and the 3D World Atlas. (Apple Computer; 408-996-1010; $2,600 and up)

- Look for an upcoming audio CD to contain a special treat for your home computer when it is released in 1995. When the still-untitled debut disc from **Emergency Broadcast Network** of Providence, Rhode Island, finiehee filling your roome with funky acid jazz, pop it in your PC or Mac to create a **do-it-yourself music video.** All it takes is an ordinary keyboard to trigger a bizarre potpourri of video and sound, including footage of O.J. Simpson tap-dancing in a dream sequence cut from one of the *Police Academy* movies, the Red Hot Chili Peppers banging away, and a clip of Ronald Reagan slapping a woman in one of his early movies.
- If you're cruising the Internet and you develop a craving for **lobsters,** tum off into the **Online BookStore.** In addition to books for 'Net surfers, the Rockport, Massachusetts-based online storefront has now added the **Online Lobster Shack** to its

continued on page 18

Be a Digital Doctor

Forget the tedium of med school. Forget exhausting residencies. And definitely forget "ER." **911 Emergency Doctor** combines them all into a single multimedia CD-ROM.

First in a series of "Career Simulators" from IBM's Multimedia Publishing Studio, 911 Emergency Doctor places you in the emergency room of a busy metropolitan hospital.

Using a personal-digital-assistant interface, you scan the animated waiting room to select the most critical patient, then make your diagnosis and treat the problem. You can also get help from other doctors, nurses, and hospital staffers (many of whom are played by TV stars, including Perry King), but if you want to make it to the top, you also have to dodge the many hassles of hospital life, from lawsuits to over-amorous nurses. The disc mixes 35 minutes of live-action video with 3-D animation and realistic hospital sounds.



Don't screw up in your diagnosis or you'll face malpractice lawsuits.



Soma nervous patients ara hoping you'li cura what ails them.

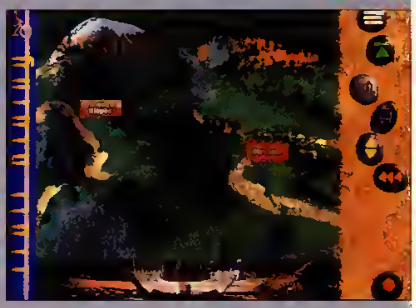
You can play by the rules, play God with your patient's health, or just play the Germinator game. You can even use the disc to diagnose real aches and pains. 911 Emergency Doctor features 3,000 graphical images and 400 possible problems and diagnoses. Look for it early next year. (IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio; 800-898-8842; Win CD, not yet priced)

—Fredric Paul

Outdoor Adventure, Indoors

Mountain Biking is the first in Media Mosaic's CD-ROM Skill Series for Outdoor Sports. This action-packed title uses video clips, animation, photographs, and detailed narration to instruct both beginners and experts. Learn the best way to maneuver over a fallen log, for instance, or how to wend your way through the stones of a dry river bed. The instruction is geared toward a slightly more mature audience (30 to 50 years old) whose *cowabunga* abandon is slowly being tempered by a desire to keep skin and bones intact. Media Mosaic plans to follow up the imminent release of its mountain-biking disc with titles covering kayaking and rock climbing. (Media Mosaic; 800-972-3766; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95) *–Ann Marcus*





They say you never forget how to ride a bike. But this kind of terrain cries out for training wheels.

Ever get the urge to take out a cow at 160 mph?



5 ROADS, 4 COWS AND 400 MEGABYTES OF REAL, LIFE-THREATENING ROAD FOOTAGE ON CD-ROM. THROW YOUR LEG OVER. IT'S TIME TO GRIND SOME BEEF.

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NEWSFLASH

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offerings. The service ships live lobsters via overnight delivery. A box of two 1.5 pounders costs $65. No word about whether melted butter comes with that. If you're hankering for a crustacean, point your Mosaic browser to http://marketplace.com/0/obs/obshome.html or via gopher to marketplace.com.

- The latest CD-ROM–only music and culture magazine is just hitting the shelves. The debut issue of **Stream** magazine includes a story on the remixing of songs by **Depeche Mode, MC 900 Ft. Jesus,** and **Nine Inch Nails.** Readers get to hear before and after tracks of the songs. Stream also con-

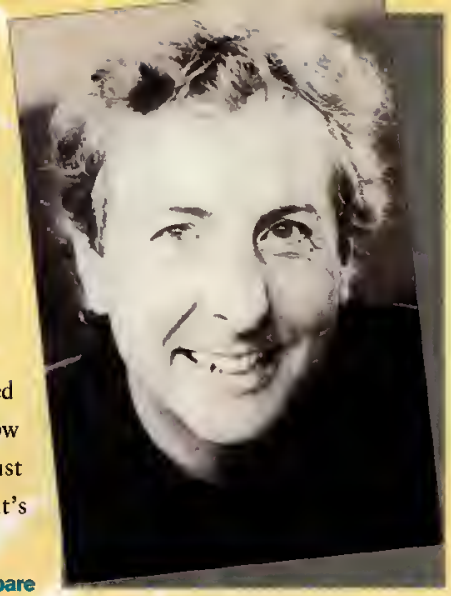


tains a strange section called the Chamber, in which you can explore the fringe world of digital culture, from underground artwork to articles on hacking and bizarre rants on the future of cyberspace. (Stream; 610-832-5960; Win CD/Mac CD, $19.95 each or $49.95 for a four-issue subscription)

- We have one thing to say about a shareware PC utility on the Internet called **CD-IT:** Don't go anywhere near it. The program, which promises the technically impossible task of converting an ordinary CD-ROM drive into a CD-Recordable (CD-R) device, instead contains a **nasty virus** that destroys crit-

continued on page 20

Star Talk with Eric Idle



Eric Idle, one of the founding fathers of Monty Python's Flying Circus, is the latest entertainment veteran to dabble in CD-ROM. This fall, he and his fellow Pythons will release a retrospective disc called Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time. Idle also provides the voice of Rincewind, the wizard who guides players through the Discworld, an upcoming game from Psygnosis based on the fantasy novels of Terry Pratchett. Idle tells Electronic Entertainment *contributor Jane Greenstein that he sees his future in multimedia as a writer.*

E2: How did you become interested in multimedia?

Eric Idle: I have a Toshiba laptop at home that I work on, and I became intrigued by what computers allow you to do versus just dealing with what's already there.

E2: How do you compare multimedia to the other media you've worked in?

EI: I like working on games—they're a mix between TV and film. Actually, being the voice of Rincewind harks back to the old days, when I used to do a lot of radio. With this, I have the time to get my lines right!

E2: Do you think your Monty Python fans are going to latch onto CD-ROM?

EI: They already have. As of August, the Monty Python disc already had $1 million worth of business [in preorders].

E2: What direction do you want to take in multimedia?

EI: I'm always interested in writing, in different ways of writing—particularly nonlinear writing. I'd like to make some of the film scripts I've written into multimedia games. One I wrote a long time ago is about a strange set of islands that don't exist, where a group of plane-crash survivors land. What's wrong with it as a film is that it has no beginning, middle, and end—which is just right for multimedia.

Hey Rocky, Watch Me Pull a CD-ROM Out of My Hat!

The crazy antics of Rocky and Bullwinkle will grace your screen in the Rocky and Bullwinkle Screen Saver Show from Asymetrix. Fans of the celebrated squirrel-and-moose duo can check them out in screen saver, system sounds, wallpaper, and (on the CD version) multimedia tour formats.



Everybody's favorite squirrel-and-moose duo is ready to invade your PC screen.

The nostalgia runs deep, with Boris and Natasha, Mr. Peabody and Sherman, and Dudley Do-Right also making onscreen appearances. Die-hard fans will especially love the in-depth tour, which explores the history and popularity of Rocket J. Squirrel, Bullwinkle, and their creator, the late Jay Ward. The product will ship in both floppy-disk and CD-ROM versions. Look for it this fall. (Asymetrix; 800-448-6543; Windows, $24.95; Win CD, $39.95) *–Joel Enos*



Russian spies Boris and Natasha help keep the Cold War alive.

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Fly higher with VIRTUAL PILOT PRO™! Taking the best features of the award-winning VIRTUAL PILOT™ plus added viewing capabilities and fire buttons, it is ideal for advanced flight simulation and driving games. For those who take their game playing seriously! For IBM PC-compatible computers.



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Jump into the cockpit and experience your most intense flight ever with FLIGHTSTICK PRO for 3DO™, the first 3DO analog joystick. A thrill to use with 3DO software from companies like Crystal Dynamics, Oomark, and Dynamix!

Take total control of your aircraft without ever removing your hand from the stick! FLIGHTSTICK PRO for Macintosh™ features a programmable trigger, three fire buttons, and a programmable eight-way switch. It attaches to the AOB port found on Mac SE or later models and requires 6.0.7 software or higher.



TRACKBALL PRD™ is a great alternative to the traditional mouse. It also serves as a professional pointing device for desktop publishing, CAD/CAM, and games. Available for both IBM PC-compatible and Macintosh computers.

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NEWSFLASH

from page 18

ical system files on the user's hard drive. The program, which is identified by the filename CD-IT.ZIP, also immediately crashes the CPU and forces you to reboot and stay in memory. You've been warned.

- In the spring, Voyager will release the interactive theater piece **So, Sue Me.** The comedy by critically acclaimed author and playwright Arthur Yorinks also includes drawings by celebrated children's artist Maurice Sendak. But don't look for So, Sue Me to follow the same path that Yorinks and Sendak cut in the world of kiddie literature. "This isn't a children's book or a game," says Yorinks. "It's a slapstick comedy and a new kind of entertainment. I hope." (Voyager; 800-446-2001; Win CD/Mac CD, not yet priced)
- You just knew that all this splashy multimedia technology was going to be irresistible to a technoweenie like **Brian Eno.** Wait no longer. Eno is putting together original music for Headcandy, a kaleidoscopic CD-ROM that fills an ordinary computer screen with a swirling cyber smorgasbord. The disc will be packaged with special prismatic glasses that create an especially intense visual experience. You should get your first taste of Headcandy any day now. (Ion; 310-312-8060; Win CD/Mac CD; $29.95)
- You'll no longer have to go to Wahington, D.C., to explore the treasures of the Smithsonian Institution. **Smithsonian's America** from Creative Multimedia will highlight more than 250 artifacts with more than 700 photos, prints, and paintings. (Creative Multimedia; 503-241-4351; Win CD, $29.99)

Virtual Reality Gets Real

With all the hype surrounding virtual-reality headsets these days, you'd think you could run down to the corner computer store with a couple hundred bucks and snag yourself some home VR. Pretty soon you may be able to do just that.



Slap on one of these beauties for a trip to another world.

Virtual I/O, a small company with some big friends—including Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI) and Logitech—is set to release its **Personal Display System** (PDS) next month.

The PDS consists of a pair of lightweight glasses, stereo earphones, and an optional head-tracking device, all of which plug into a personal computer or game deck such as a Sega Genesis or Super Nintendo.

Once connected, you see a better than VHS-quality picture on a screen that is the visual equivalent of an 80-inch-diagonal TV set about 12 feet away. Even better, the PDS supports full 3-D stereo viewing, which is sort of like watching a full-motion View-Master. (TCI reportedly is looking to broadcast sporting events in full 3-D format compatible with the PDS.) And games that support "head tracking" will let you look in all directions inside your virtual world.

Virtual I/O also keeps safety in mind by making the viewscreens see-through. You simply hit a Video Mute button, to look around without having to remove the headset.

If $400 is still too rich for your blood, Virtual I/O says it will have a gamer-oriented product without the 3-D ability that will sell for less than $250 early next year. (Virtual I/O; 206-382-7410; PC/Mac/Genesis/SNES, $400)

—Christopher Lindquist

Off-Ramps Online

Traveler's Aid on the Infobahn

The Internet is so big and sprawling that figuring out where you're going can be a real challenge. Two of the better road maps are published electronically by Scott Yanoff and Jeremy Smith.

Yanoff's Internet Services List (better known as the Yanoff List) and Smith's **Big Fun with Uncle Bert** offer helpful directions to various Internet resources, including serious reference resources as well as plenty of spots for light entertainment. Both lists started as personal logs of Internet sites and branched out from there.

Care to know where there's a game server to tap into? How about joke repositories? Maybe you'd like an address for real-time chat services. These lists can help you find your way.

To get the biweekly Yanoff list by FTP (file transfer protocol), connect to csd4.csd.uwm.edu. The list is in the /pub directory as inet.services.txt. You can grab the Big Fun list, released approximately twice a year, via FTP by connecting to ftp.csos.orst.edu, then getting the version you want (it comes in various flavors of text formatting) in the /pub/networking/bigfun directory. Either one is a great starting point for your next Internet road trip.

–Andy Eddy

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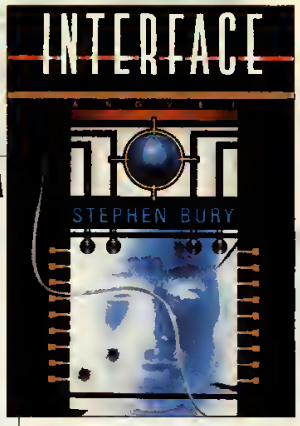
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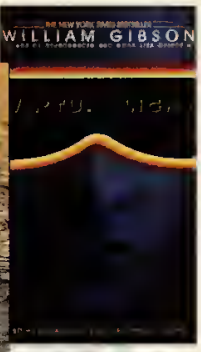
SHARP EDGE

Cyberlit!









What used to be science fiction is now an everyday literary occurence.

Mainstream fiction is going high tech. Books once deemed science fiction because of their references to new technologies and futuristic worlds are now considered plain old novels.

Last year Michael Crichton, who has long incorporated technology in his work, wrote the best-seller *Disclosure* (Ballantine; 800-733-3000; $6.99), a tale of sexual harassment in a Seattle firm that included a pivotal scene in which the main characters met in cyberspace.

Other recent fiction—science and otherwise—that incorporates networked worlds, cyberspace, and virtual reality include the following:

Death Dream by Ben Bova (Bantam; 800-323-9872; $22.95). Cyber World, a virtual-reality theme park, is the site of some mysterious deaths, and a computer programmer wonders if the VR simulations are to blame.

Interface by Stephen Bury (Bantam; 800-323-9872; $12.95). A presidential candidate finds a unique way to read the polls: He's got a biochip lodged in his brain that enables him to anticipate the media, his constituents, and his opponent.

Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson (Bantam Spectra; 800-323-9872; $5.99). Hiro Protagonist and his buddy Y.T. hop into a computer-generated universe to get to the bottom of the lethal drug Snow Crash.

Virtual Light by William Gibson (Bantam Spectra; 800-323-9872; $5.99). The latest novel from the man who coined the term *cyberspace*. It centers on the hunt for a pair of virtual-reality glasses that reveal the technological nightmare a Japanese company has in store for San Francisco.

Virtual Love by Avodah Offit (Simon & Schuster; 800-223-2348; $22). Two psychiatrists exchange tales of their lives and loves online—and find that it beats real life.

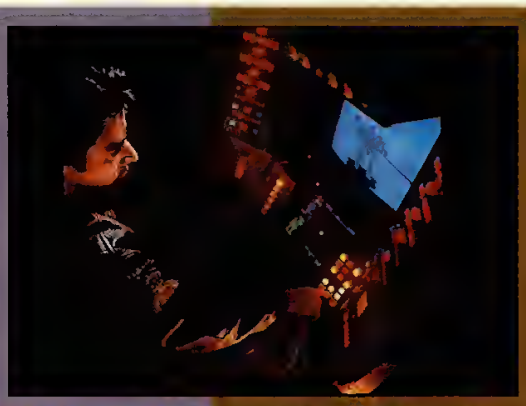
In addition, next fall the first of three novels based on the hit CD-ROM game Myst are due from Robyn and Rand Miller, to be published by Hyperion. The books will help unlock the secrets of Myst Island. This time, though, the technology preceded the fiction!

—Jane Greenstein

Kill 'Em All

If you're tired of traveling to the local virtual-reality arcade only to blast away at the same losers you torched last week, try offing some folks from across the country instead. The [illegible] chain of amusement centers has recently installed SiteLink, a high-speed network that allows game players from around the U.S. to do battle. A newly created video speaker-phone hookup lets electronic warriors see and speak with their newfound friends (or enemies) once the firing stops. SiteLink is available at Virtual World sites in Chicago, San Diego, Dallas, Las Vegas, and Walnut Creek, California, with overseas hookups in the works. (Virtual World; 213-663-9496; $10–$12 per SiteLinked game)

–James Daly



Pick off enemies from Chicago to San Diego in newly networking Virtual World parlors.

Anything is possible.

Meet Rjak.
He wants to rule the World.
Only you can stop him. Introducing

MASTER OF MAGIC

the first PC game to combine strategic conquest and fantasy adventure in one unique realm.
Two worlds - material and magical - are yours to explore, conquer and control.
Spells, heroes and fantastical creatures are yours to command.
That is, unless Rjak and his friends destroy you first.
From the creators of the award-winning Master of Orion.

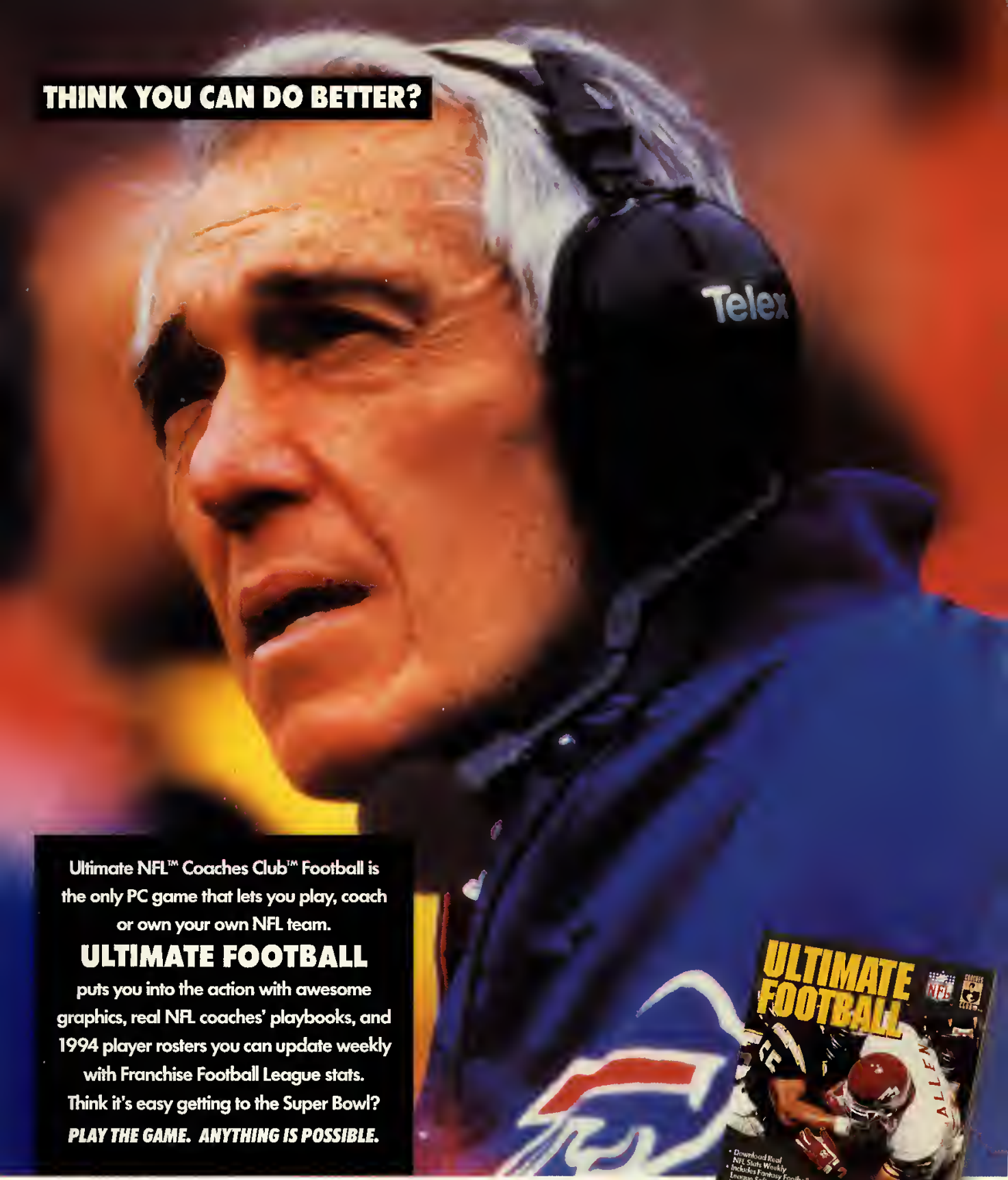


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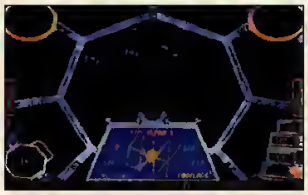
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Leader Board

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software



TIE Fighter blows the 5 ft. 10 Pak out of No. 1 on the PC charts.

PC GAMES

1 **TIE Fighter** In the new *Star Wars* adventure, you no longer help Luke and the Rebels. This time around, you're out to do Darth Vader's bidding. (LucasArts Entertainment, 800-782-7927, DOS, $63.95)

2 **5 ft. 10 Pak** A bargain-priced 10-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Doom, Episode 1, King's Quest V, and Time Man of the Year. It drops to No. 2. (Sirius Publishing, 800-247-0307, DOS CO/Win CD, approximately $40)

3 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions will keep this revolutionary game on your play list. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263, Win CD, $59.95)

4 **Outpost** Sierra On-Line's space survival sim is selling well despite some nagging bugs. After two months, it is staking a claim for a top spot on the board (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707, Windows/Win CD, $69.95)

5 **SimCity 2000** Build a city of the future with this improved version of the classic, enjoying its seventh month on the Leader Board (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DOS/Windows, $54.95)

6 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting drama. closing in on a year on the board (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, $99.99)

7 **Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this Star Wars adventure. After nine months, it is just slipping out of the top five. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, $79.95)

8 **Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0** Upgraded graphics and new features keep this hugely popular flight sim soaring high. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, $64.95)

9 **Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** Now, your kid's favorite superheroes are the stars of a CD-ROM. It debuts on the PC Games and CD-ROM lists. (Paramount Home Video; 310-841-2790; Win/Mac CD, $39.95)

10 **X-Wing** Help the Rebels defeat the Empire in this space-flight simulator enhanced with extensive *Star Wars* film footage. This month, all three LucasArts' space operas are on the PC Games list. (LucasArts Entertainment, 800-782-7927; DOS, $55.95)



Castles: Siege & Conquest debuts on the Mac side at the No. 3 spot.

MAC GAMES

1 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions will keep this compelling and revolutionary game high on your play list. It is the No. 1 Mac game for the second month in a row. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263, Mac CD, $59.95)

2 **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic. Eight months on the Mac chart and it is still going strong. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, $54.95)

3 **Castles: Siege & Conquest** Build castles, protect your fortifications, and play master of the realm in this medieval simulation (Interplay Productions, 800-969-4263; Mac, approximately $40)

4 **Jump Raven** Hop into armed battle pods and lead a group of cyberpunk warriors against a global crime network featuring of the foul-mouthed criminals in the world. (CyberFlix; 615-546-1157; Mac CD, $69.95)

5 **Chessmester 3000** Play one of the oldest strategy games and get advice from the masters Karpov and Kasparov. (The Software Toolworks, 800-234-3088; Mac, $49.95)



Mighty Morphin Power Rangers is a favorite on TV—and on CD-ROM at No. 7.

CD-ROM TITLES

1 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions will keep this revolutionary game high on your play list. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263, Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

2 **5 ft. 10 Pak** A bargain-priced 10-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Doom, Episode 1; King's Quest V; and Time Man of the Year. (Sirius Publishing; 800-247-0307; OOS CD/Win CD, approximately $40)

3 **Outpost** Sierra's space survival simulator is selling well despite nagging bugs and missing features. After two months, it is staking a claim for the top spot on the board. (Sierra On-Line, 800-757-7707; Win CD; 69.95)

4 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting drama. Closing in on a year on the board (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD/Mac CD/CD-i, $99.99)

5 **Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this *Star Wars* action adventure. After nine months, it is still in the top five. (LucasArts Entertainment, 800-782-7927, OOS CD/Mac CD, $79.95)

6 **Microsoft Encarte** Experience the world around you through video segments, audio clips, animation, and text in this high-tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft, 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $139)

7 **Mighty Morphin Power Rengers** Now, your kid's favorite teenage superheroes are the stars of a CD-ROM. It debuts on the PC Games and CD-ROM lists (Paramount Home Video; 310-841-2790; Win/Mac CD, $39.95)

8 **Microsoft Bookshelf** A complete set of digital references, including *American Heritage Dictionary* and *Original Roget's Thesaurus of Words and Phrases.* (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $69.95)

9 **Corel Gellery** A single CD with ten thousand pieces of professional clips. (Corel; 800-772-6735; Win CD/Mac CD, $59)

10 **X-COM** Defend the Earth from invading UFOs in this against-all-odds space simulation. (MicroProse; 800-879-7529; OOS CD, $47.95)

The Leader Board is a compilation of top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for July, 1994. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.



FIGHTER WING™



It's combat no matter how you look at it!



Fighter Wing *is a new breed af flight simulatian game, affering the ultimate arcade flight cambat experience with the world's top fighter oircroft, but without the steep learning curves. Armed with the high perfarmance Gemsaft™ 3-D engine with real time terrain generatian using real maps, a wide variety af challenging cambat missians, ond octuol cambot video footoge, Fighter Wing pocks on awesome orsenol that can outgun any flight combat simulator.*

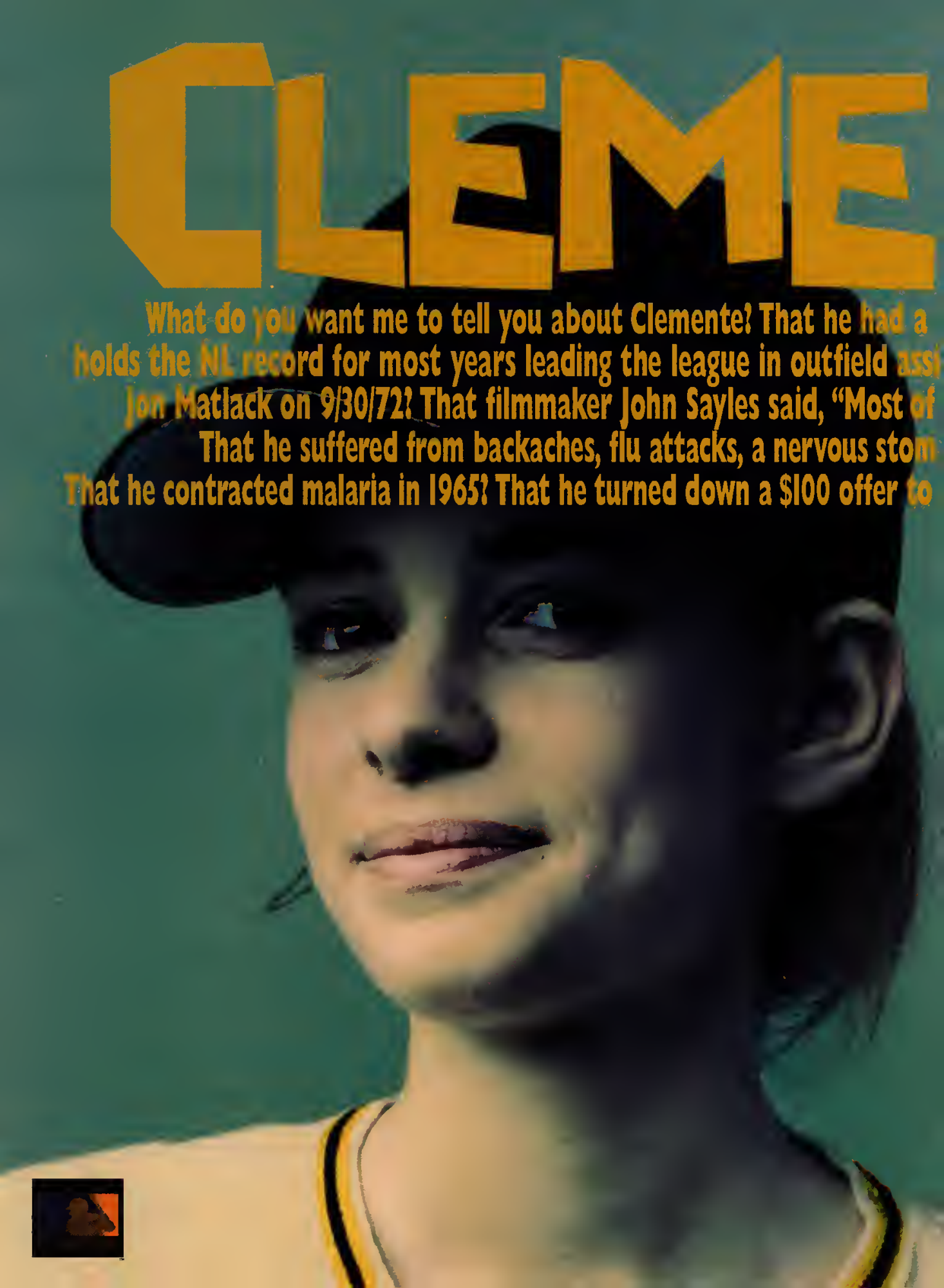
- ***Fighter wing pravides a "sit ond shaat" experience in o matter af minutes***
- ***Featuring actual video footage from the oward winning TV series FirePawer™***
- ***Choose from Troining Missions; Multiple ployer Missions for up to 16 ployers ploying over o Locol Areo Network; ond Complex Missions for 1-3 ployers competing ogoinst the computer***
- ***Pilats con fly oll of todoy's state-of-the-ort oircroft from the world's most powerful notions, in the world's most dongerous hot spots.***

CD-ROM Edition

Published by
Merit Software™
Dallas, Texas 800-238-4277

Developed by
GEMSOFT CORP.

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CLEME
What do you want me to tell you about Clemente? That he had a
holds the NL record for most years leading the league in outfield ass
Jon Matlack on 9/30/72? That filmmaker John Sayles said, "Most of
That he suffered from backaches, flu attacks, a nervous stom
That he contracted malaria in 1965? That he turned down a $100 offer to



NTE!?

.317 lifetime average? That he won 12 Gold Gloves? That he sts with five? That he got his 3,000th and final hit off the Mets' what I know about style I learned from Roberto Clemente"? ach, diarrhea, infected tonsils, headaches and bone chips? be in the film "The Odd Couple"? Or that he was right-handed?

I'M NOT JUST A CLEMENTE FREAK. I know a ton of other stuff about baseball, for example. New York Giants outfielder Monte Irvin was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1973, the same year as Clemente.

I know all this stuff 'cause I got Microsoft® Complete Baseball. It's a multimedia encyclopedia that has more stuff about Clemente and Abner Doubleday's fabled 1839 invention than Nolan Ryan has strikeouts. (Did you know Clemente only fanned 1,230 times in 9,454 at bats?)

It's loaded with stats on every player who ever played and photo-crammed bios of 7,500 major-leaguers, from Hank Aaron (who, incidentally, had 68 fewer career triples than Clemente) to Carl Yaztrzemski (whose .285 lifetime average is 32 points lower than Clemente's).

You can see some of baseball's coolest moments on video, including Clemente teammate Bill Mazeroski's 1960-World-Series-winning-game-seven-ninth-inning homerun off Ralph Terry.

There's even a trivia quiz so you can see how much you know about the game, its legends like Clemente, and its great seasons like 1971 when the Pirates won the World Series and Clemente was named Series MVP. If, for some strange reason, you're more of a basketball or golf fan, there's Microsoft Complete NBA™ Basketball and the Microsoft Golf game—two sports which Roberto Clemente never played.

Microsoft®

If you'd like more information about the complete line of Microsoft products for your home PC call 1 800 228 6229 ext. 4PX. In Canada, call 1 800 56 9048. In Europe, Complete Baseball only Microsoft Encarta™ and Microsoft Bookshelf® have stuff about Clemente.) ©1994 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft and [illegible] are registered trademarks and Encarta is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. The Major League Baseball logo is a registered trademark of Major League Baseball Properties Inc. NBA is a trademark of NBA Properties Inc.

Spotlight

THE PERFORMA 630

Apple Gets It Right

Finally, Apple has produced a Macintosh computer that delivers multimedia performance at the kind of price that will challenge any DOS/Windows PC setup available. Unlike most PCs, the **Performa 630** series was designed from the ground up with multimedia in mind. The front panel even has volume controls and a remote control sensor.

The 630 series also features a high-end Motorola 33MHz 68LC040 chip and 1MB of dedicated video memory for faster graphics. (If you want a floating point processor, the business-oriented Quadra 630 is for you.)

The Performa 636CD we reviewed (intended for the higher-education market) costs less than $2,000, including all the extras: 8MB of RAM, a 250MB hard disk, a caddyless double-speed CD-ROM drive, and a 14-inch monitor (our review system came with a 15-inch model).

There are five other Performa 630 configurations, ranging from the $1,500 base model with a 14-inch monitor, 4MB of RAM, and a modem, to the top-of-the-line 638CDV, which includes the Apple Video/TV System for making your computer double as a TV set—all for about $2,300.

The 636CD ships with ClarisWorks 2.1, a clip-art collection, the American Heritage Dictionary, and sampler versions of Spectre VR and Spin Doctor—all preinstalled on the hard disk. You'll also find the 1993 Time Almanac and the New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia on CD-ROM. The consumer edition of the 630 has an even longer list of bonus titles.

The 630 series' most innovative feature may just be its terrific support for video applications. For $249, you can add the Apple Video/TV System and turn any 630 into the best combo computer-and-television set available today. A half-hour with a Philips-head screwdriver is all it takes to install the internal video board and TV tuner card. No worrying about interrupt conflicts and DMA channels.

Plug in your cable TV feed and watch a picture that's almost as crisp as the one on the living-room set. Onscreen controls let you set brightness, tint, and contrast, as well as change channels and adjust the volume. The unit even comes with a wireless remote control for the complete couch-potato experience. (The remote also operates the computer's CD-ROM drive, for use as a convenient stereo system.)

Learning its lessons from last year's MacTV, Apple has taken full advantage of the computer/TV combination. You can move and resize the video window to fit in a corner of the screen and even set alarms to remind you that your favorite show is coming on.

And that's only the beginning. More ambitious videophiles can capture both still images and video sequences, and even compress them on the fly for a better fit on the hard disk. Avid's VideoShop 2.0 editing software turns the system into a budget video-production center.

In many ways, the Performa 630 is an ideal home multimedia computer. It's fast, affordable, innovative, and easy to use. And later this fall, you'll be able to upgrade it to use the new PowerPC processors. Now, if it would only run the hundreds of terrific games and multimedia titles developed for DOS and Windows. (Apple Computer; 800-767-2775; approximately $1,950)

—Fredric Paul



Price and performance mark the Performa 630 series.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

Odds and Ads



Mr. Saki, the double-mouthed manager from Hell.

Unadulterated insanity and inspired disorder make **BAR-MIN-SKI: Consumer Product** one of the most unusual and experimental new media creations on the market.

A multimedia portfolio of the work of multi-talented artist Bill Barminski, Consumer Product immerses you in a bizarre version of the mind-bending, many-mouthed world of advertising. The disc mixes sensationalized representations of pop culture with garish 1950s-style advertising gimmicks to create an interactive collage of strange experiences.



Ad-vice from the lamp.



Barminski does blasphemy better.

Interview the artist by clicking on a box of cereal labeled Act-Ual. You'll get a glimpse of how Barminski's twisted vision of consumer culture evolved from his connections with the Austin, Texas, punk music scene. Check out his initial work as a cartoonist in Xeroxed fanzines, and read his stuff in the *Daily Texan* school paper.

See how Barminski's run-ins with ultra-conservative Reagan-ites and gung-ho frat boys helped shape his King of Pre-Fab comic strip.

The artist's disorienting, yet charming, paintings and drawings appear under the Art O' Rama (explores creative process), Focus-on-Paintings (looks at specific painting scenes), and Image Maze options (a retrospective of Barminski's work). MusiCrisps plays Barminski's music. Despite a self-avowed lack of musical skill, Barminski has composed almost two dozen respectable alternative-acid-jazz dance tunes by generating rhythm and melody riddled with sounds taken from advertising campaigns and other bits of media culture.

There's even a game! Play SubVert to become an ad exec who's hounded by his two-mouthed, zipper-headed boss into coming up with catchy slogans for some seriously wacked-out products. If you enjoy the unusual, multimedia doesn't get any more obtuse than this. Collectors might want to try to get their hands on one of the $100 premiere editions of the disc, which includes a can opener. (Consumer Productions; 310-391-5897; Win CD/Mac CD; $49.95.) *–Joel Enos*

Remembering D-Day



The Preparations section shows the startling magnitude of the operation.

It was June 6th, 1944—D-Day—when the Allied troops opened the Western Front by landing at Normandy and beginning their drive to liberate Paris from Nazi Germany. In honor of the 50th anniversary of this historic invasion, Living Media gives us **D-Day: 100 Days of Destiny.**

This disc, which is based on the work of historian Eddy Florentin, provides insight into the logistics necessary to pull off Operation Overlord. It illuminates the various subplots of the operation with hundreds of photos, 50 interactive maps, an hour of original sound tracks, and 30 minutes of video.

You'll learn about secret meetings between Allied forces from Quebec to Tehran, the French Resistance's counterpropaganda campaign, the exploits of English double agent Paulo Junto, and the tragic loss of more than 900 Allied soldiers during the Tiger training simulation.

The When section forms the heart of the program. It's made up of six subsections: War, Strategy, Preparations, Landing, Normandy Battle, and Paris Liberation. Each of these includes an image-enhanced listing of key events that resembles a strip of celluloid. Click on the image for a particular date for evocative photos, audio segments, newspaper accounts, video footage, and maps. Unfortunately, the captions can be sketchy and the audio segments don't directly explain the pictures.

In addition, the toolbar's VCR-like controls for fast-forwarding and rewinding do not respond consistently. Beyond these minor technical glitches, there's little to complain about in D-Day: 100 Days of Destiny. (Living Media; 800-833-4674; Win/Mac CD, $59) *–Bill Meyer*



Click on a spot on the map to learn about that particular place's role in the Normandy invasion.

Spotlight

SINGING THE BLUES

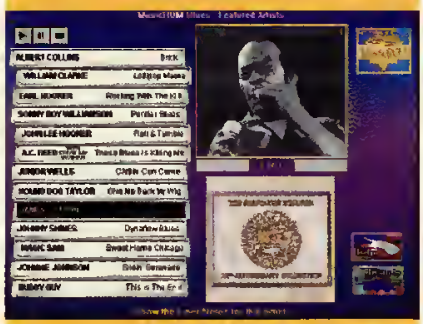
Blues News

The blues may not be a high-tech art form, but **MusicROM Blues** from SelectWare uses CD-ROM technology to add another dimension to the truly great music.



Son Seals is a great second-generation Chicago blues star.

The disc combines a 13-song blues sampler for your audio CD player with a CD-ROM reference guide to more than 700 blues performers and 5,000 blues albums. (The data is taken from Matrix's *All-Music Guide.*) There's even a (badly recorded) telephone interview with blues man A.C. Reed.



Don't just read about the Blues, listen to it.

MusicROM Blues's interface is not particularly clever, and the database displays straight text only, but the 13 tunes by artists ranging from Buddy Guy to John Lee Hooker are plenty hot. At $30, it costs a bit more than a music-only CD, but you get a whole lot of blues background for your bucks. (SelectWare Technologies; 810-477-7340; Win CD, $29.95) *—Fredric Paul*



Food for Thought



This disc could make your mouth water.

"You are what you eat." So says **4 Paws of Crab,** a narrative Thai cookbook that blends the experiences of Nora Bateson, a UC Berkeley coed, with those of "Bird" Leelaguagom, a Thai restaurateur. The disc lets you explore not only Thai cooking but also the culture and history that surrounds it.

The name 4 Paws of Crab comes from Bird's amusing translation of the Thai word for *claws.* The mistranslation pointed out the contrasts in cultures, and the name stuck. This personal touch suffuses the disc.

The program's interface sports colorful street scenes, marketplace sounds, and often a stream-of-consciousness commentary that reveals glimpses of Thai culture and explains the story behind some of the dishes.

Weeping tiger Barbecue, we learn, was named after the inedible beef used by northeastern Thai people that was rumored to make even tigers cry. As Bird prepares mussels with lemongrass, he explains that these shellfish are revered for their aphrodisiacal qualities. You may be seduced by the fine recipes.

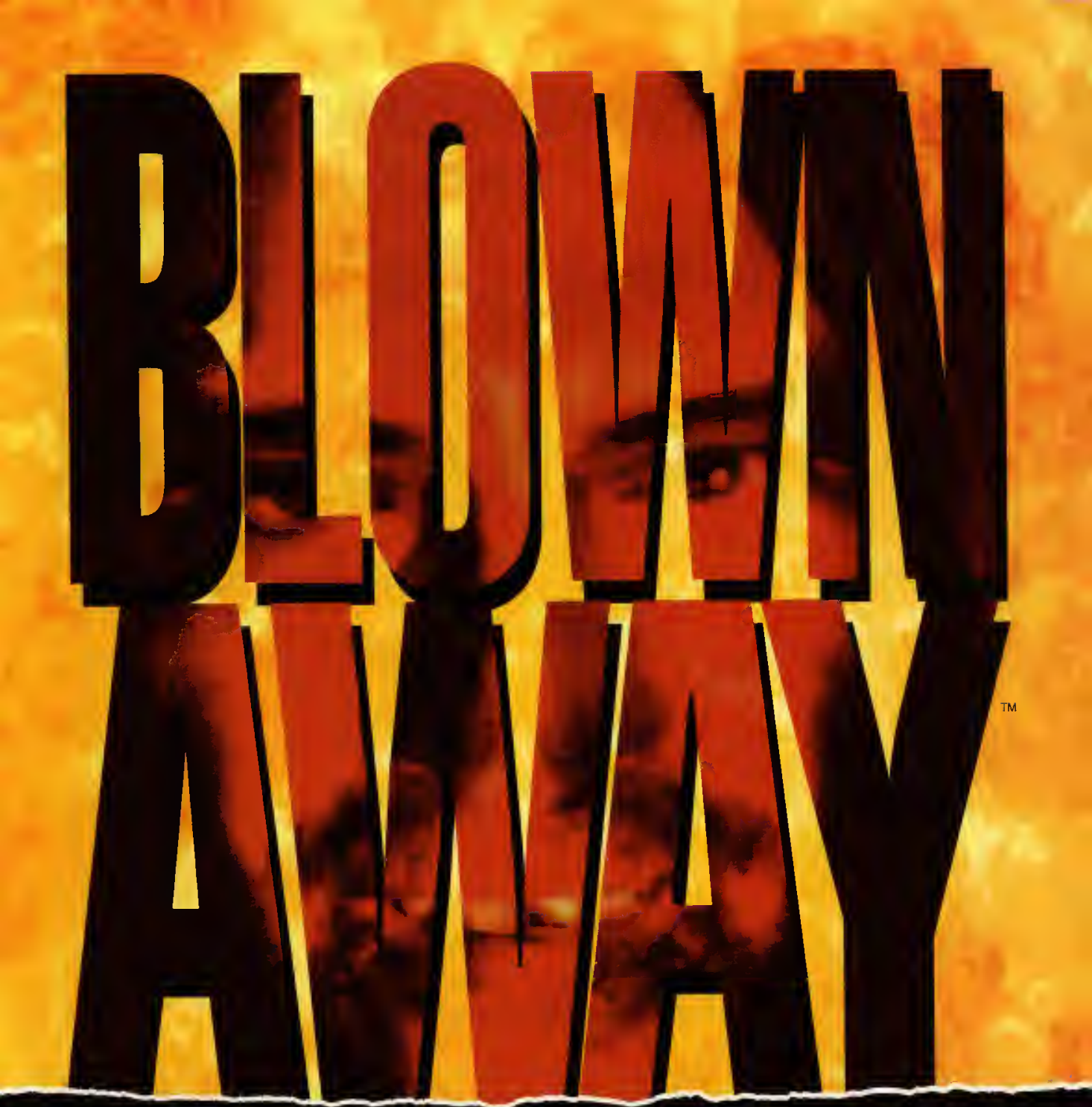
The cookbook mingles recipes for home-cooked dishes with those for typical stall-style foods, such as fish-on-a-stick. The demo option takes you step by step through each recipe. Drumrolls of percussive chopping accompany the images, and some recipes also have videos of the actual cooking process, but the small window and jumpy cuts show little more than ingredients being stirred in a pot. The glossary shows and explains the special ingredients used in Thai cooking. You can temper the fiery and aromatic food to suit Western palates, and most of the recipes offer readily available substitutes for some of the more exotic herbs.

4 Paws of Crab will inspire you to fire up your neglected stove and get cooking. A-roy (delicious)! (Live Oak Multimedia; 800-454-7557; Win/Mac CD, $44.95)

—Joy Ma



Phat Thai noodles made easy.



Twisted Villain. Twisted Logic. Twisted Games.

"IT BLEW ME AWAY!" -Electronic Games

"Blown Away uniquely blends multiple genres for a true interactive experience." -Computer Player

CD-ROM WINDOWS™

IMAGINATION PILOTS

IVI PUBLISHING

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Spotlight

LONG, STRANGE TRIPS

World Update

If you're a global traveler—or even a homebound geography lover—The Software Toolworks' World Atlas 5.0 will broaden your horizons with more than 250 maps. Version 5.0 is a vast improvement over the previous release of the product, with a bigger video window, more maps, city data, and photographs.



Check out the sights with World Atlas's new, bigger videos.

Travelers will appreciate the Phrases feature, which pronounces common expressions in 30 languages. The currency converter, city maps, and distance guide are also helpful for tourists.

A floppy-disk version of the World Atlas is available without the video and audio. (The Software Toolworks; 415-883-3000; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95; Mac, $49.95) —*Christine Grech*

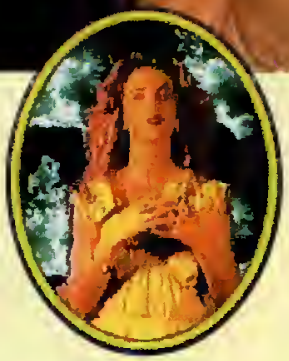
Manual Mystery Tour

If you ever attached even a shred of legitimacy to the mystical art and science of palmistry, Emerald Entertainment's Palmistry Interactive CD will eliminate it for good.



The key to your future lies in the palm of your hand.

With help from Aliena, your seductive blonde new-age video guide, the disc walks you through the rather grueling palm-reading process. The 11-part procedure takes nearly an hour. You must match the various parts of your hand against countless out-of-focus, badly laid-out photographs of fingers, thumbs, and palm lines. You are asked to discern odd, cryptic symbols in various places on your palm. The symbols range from common hatch marks to a devil's trident.



Meet Aliena, your mystical palm-palm girl.

Things get worse when you finally print out your reading. I got a full page of contradictory, incoherent platitudes and clichés, including "Hitch your wagon to a star." When I got to the line that read, "Tidiness surrounds everything you do," and then took a look around my office, I knew how much stock to put in the reading.

The most accurate part of the disc comes in the credits. A box showing video outtakes lets you giggle with Miss Aliena as she makes fun of the program's script and fumbles her lines. (Emerald Entertainment; 714-494-4988; Win/Mac CD, $49.95)

—*Ann M. Marcus*

Lucid Dreaming

As I walked along a foggy path outside an apartment complex, I looked down at my watch with amazement. It was already 7:40! How could that be? The last thing I remembered, I was just getting dressed for work. Where had the day gone, and how did I get here? Suddenly I realized that the sun was coming up, not going down. Wait a minute... I stopped walking. The fog evaporated, revealing a bright white sky—no, my ceiling. I could feel myself in bed. So it's a dream—but the images were so vivid, and I felt like I could control what happened next!

Who's to say what influence NovaDreamer really has on one's dreams? All I know is that since I started playing with the phenomenon of lucid dreaming, I've had a new sense of depth and control over my nocturnal mental wanderings.



Dream a little dream...

Your journey into lucid dreaming begins just after you jump into your jammies, but before your head hits the pillow, when you put on the NovaDreamer mask. The mask tracks your eye movements. When you have entered REM (rapid eye movement) sleep and begin dreaming, the NovaDreamer subtly alerts you via a series of programmable sounds and light flashes. The theory is that if you are consciously aware that you are dreaming, you can steer your dreams as you like.

If you can't quite get the hang of lucid dreaming on your own, you can sign up for one of the Lucidity Institute's workshops given by Dr. Stephen LaBerge, Ph.D., author of *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming*. (Lucidity Institute; 800-465-8243; $275) —*Joel Enos*

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK



AFTER PLAYING THESE HOLES,



YOU'LL WONDER WHERE



THE CLUBHOUSE IS.



PLAY FOR REAL™

Every time you grip your clubs, this game will grip you. This is World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach. The most detailed, dynamic game you'll every play. You're traveling with your ball on awesome aerial flybys. Jump from one of the 500 different views of each hole. The full motion video graphics are created with the most advanced development system. (WaveFront on Silicon Graphics workstations is part of the driving force) Big time CD quality sound. Over 15 different types of games. (Skins, Texas Scramble, Matchplay...) Practice on the driving range, putting green, special chip shots, any single hole or play a practice round. You determine and select your stance, swing, power and backspin. Sorry there's no 19th hole for you clubby types. But you'll get over it.



WORLD CUP GOLF

HYATT DORADO BEACH

Available for: IBM PC CD-ROM, Sega CD™ and 3DO™.

No these ere not photos from our vecation in Dorado Beech, they're from the PC version of the geme.

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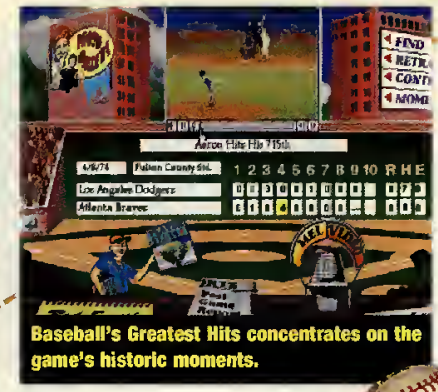
Spotlight

BASEBALL'S GREATEST HITS

Baseball Like It Used to Be

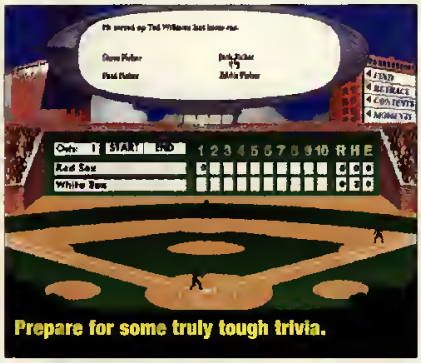


The disc's nostalgic feel begins on the opening screen.



What with strikes and domes and designated hitters, it's easy to lose sight of what made baseball fun in the first place. **Baseball's Greatest Hits** from Voyager uses modern technology to remind you.

Written by Jeff Kisseloff and narrated by veteran sportscaster Mel Allen, it serves up audio and video clips of 70 great moments in baseball history. You can relive everything from the thrill of the 1932 Series when the Babe slammed a homer right where he'd promised it, to the agony of watching the World Series escape through Billy Buck's legs in game six on that memorable night in '86.



Prepare for some truly tough trivia.

There are terrific photos and 75 audio interviews with all-time baseball greats, team histories and stadium pictures, a time line of important events in the game, and a tough trivia game that will challenge even true baseball junkies. There's even a player index so you can quickly find your favorites.

Unfortunately, the multimedia clips aren't always as enlightening as they could be. You can't simultaneously watch and hear Pudge Fisk hit his 12th inning homer in game six of the '75 series. And the only coverage of the 1989 earthquake as it happened at San Francisco's Candlestick Park before a World Series game is audio—there's no video! Timeliness is another issue. You can watch Joe Carter's Series-clinching dinger in 1993, for example, but the team history quits with the Jays' 1989 division title.

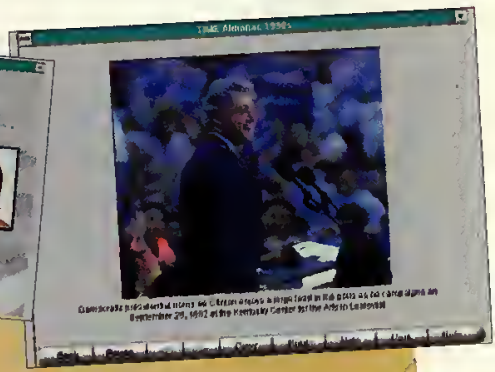
Overall, the program offers charming graphics and a level of detail that true fans of the game will appreciate. And since it's a multiplatform disc, you can enjoy Baseball's Greatest Hits whether you root for Macs or PCs. (Voyager; 800-446-2001; Win/Mac CD, $49.95)

—Fredric Paul

Time Almanacs

If other magazines pick up the idea behind **Time Almanac: Reference Edition, Time Almanac: 20th Century,** and **Time Almanac: 1990s,** you can say good-bye to microfiche. That's good news for serious researchers and for people with a casual question. These SoftKey International CD-ROM titles make researching a paper or proving you're right a pretty easy deal.


The New Face of America's built-in morphing utilities lets you blend two people's features into one to envision their offspring.


Making a presidential reference.

The products feature cross-referenced information on the dramatic events that graced the pages of *Time*. You also get a photo montage of "Russia: Death of A Dream," by Margaret Bourke-White and Anthony Suau. The Newsquest game lets you play a *Time* reporter who must decipher five quotes from 20th-century personalities before a 5 p.m. deadline.

Reference Edition includes 20,000 articles and more than 900 photos, charts, and graphs. A special section covers historical events that took place before the magazine first appeared in March of 1923. The 20th Century volume features more video than the others—48 minutes. Unique to the 1990s edition is a nifty morphing product called New Face of America, which lets you merge nationalities and approximate the look of their "offspring." The programs automatically footnote your source when you print out an article.

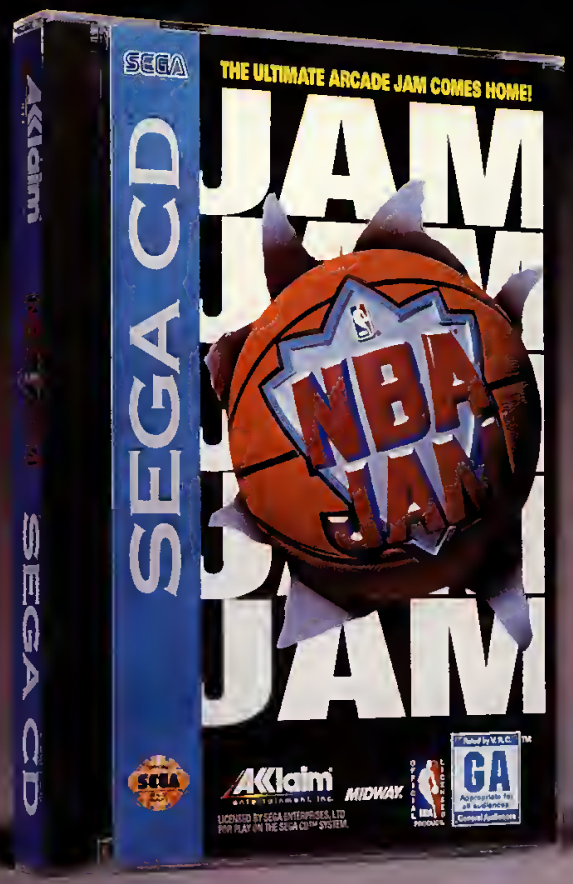
One quirk is the confusingly labeled People/Places search button. The button actually performs adjacent-word searches for terms such as George Washington, New York, or ice cream—any term with multiple words. It does not, as it might suggest, take you to an index of people and place names that appear in the database, and it is inoperable until you start typing the second word of the search term. (SoftKey International; 800-227-5609; Reference Edition: Mac CD/DOS CD/Win CD, $79.95; 20th Century: Win CD, $59.95; 1990s: Win CD, $39.95;). *—Joel Enos*

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MIDWAY

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Acclaim entertainment inc

Spotlight

GOOD EATS

Meal On A Disc

Hungry? Thirsty? Satisfy those urges with the CD-ROM repast of your choice from Deep River Publishing's **Great Restaurants, Wineries & Breweries.** This Windows disc lets you visit hundreds of fine eateries, noble vineyards, and funky brew pubs—all without gaining an ounce.



Dine and drink your way across America.

Though by no means comprehensive, the guide offers tasty choices from all around the country. It covers established favorites like The Palm in New York and The Pump Room in Chicago, as well as off-beat venues like the Miracle of Science Bar and Grill near MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Big Time Brewing Co. in Seattle.



Get the good word on great eats and drinks.

The interface is well-stocked with maps, animation, music, and sound effects. Tailor your next nosh experience by location, hours, child-friendliness, and even wheelchair accessibility.

You'll find an abundance of photos and graphics along with detailed descriptions of the ambiance and the house specialties. There are even recipes straight from the menus.

Great Restaurants, Wineries & Breweries is a boon to the traveler, but it may also help you find that undiscovered culinary gem right in your own neighborhood. (Deep River Publishing; 800-643-5630; Win CD, $39.95) —*Fredric Paul*

Advertisement



We Give It Two and a Half Stars

I'm always a little skeptical when a movie critic pans *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean.* But Leonard Maltin is certainly entitled to his opinion. And he's got lots of them. 20,000 to be exact. That's how many reviews you'll find in the electronic version of **Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1995.** That's 300 more entries than last year's printed edition.

Maltin awards the films up to four stars (or a bomb to those he won't recommend at all). You can search the extensive database by actor, director, or MPAA rating, among other categories. For those on the same wavelength as Maltin, search out the films he likes best.

When compared with CD-ROM-based movie guides, such as VideoHound's Golden Movie Retriever, MegaMovie Guide 3.0, or Microsoft's Cinemania, Maltin's diskette-based guide falls short because it lacks video clips. Besides, Cinemania includes Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide. (Penguin USA; 800-331-4624; Windows, $29.99)

—Joel Enos

Looking Through Crystal Walls

"Fertile Soil Will Grow Large Eggplants," observes a red-robed sage as he descends onto a large lotus blossom. Yes, Grasshopper, semi-mystical advice is now available on Windows wallpaper.



Wrinkled luck: 13 Sharpeis.

The transcendent savants of Satori Sky are just a few of the characters you'll encounter in Domain Virtual World's **Crystal Walls.** In addition to the floating Zen masters, this set of 18 interactive environments includes the relaxing quietude of Koi Pond, a lotus-covered pond filled with calico fish that gracefully chase the mouse pointer.

On a stranger note, the building ornaments in Gargoyles flock to eat the raw meat you toss their way. You'll encounter the rebellious sauciness of spastic bartop dancers and a multi-orgasmic mechanical bull-rider in High Line's pen-and-ink-style honky-tonk.

13 Sharpeis Contemplating the Universe is a wrinkled take off on 101 Dalmatians. Each time you click on the front-most mutt, he rushes forward, paws the monitor, and emits a forlorn wail. (Domain Virtual World; 800-896-7537; Windows, $40)

—Joel Enos

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While there have been space programs on CD-ROM before, there's never been anything quite like this. Next Step Mars? makes learning fun because of its unique format – the information is presented in the form of an exciting adventure. And learning is reinforced with fascinating videos and educational activities. So if you want to travel to Mars, first pick up the one CD-ROM that tells you all about it. *See your favorite software retailer or call IVI Publishing at (800) 432-1332, Dept. 212.*

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edutainment



The Jonathan Winters Show

Meet Aristotle McGuffin, an absent-minded-professor type who has accidentally projected himself back to the 15th century—to merry olde England, to be specific.

Time Warner Interactive's The Incredible Adventures of Aristotle McGuffin was developed by the same folks who created the tremendously popular Carmen Sandiego series. The animated game features the voice of the wacky and wonderful Jonathan Winters—in all of the roles.

McGuffin must find the necessary materials to fix his time machine before the evil steward Basil and his equally unpleasant sidekick Edmund catch up with him. If they find our time-warped friend, they'll imprison him forever in a medieval dungeon.

Look for Aristotle McGuffin next spring. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

—Ann M. Marcus



Make Mario your kid's mentor, or choose Luigi or the Princess instead.

TYPING TUTORS FOR KIDS

Multimedia Hunt and Peck

Typing is a skill that kids need to enter the world of computers. Fortunately, there's a pair of typing tutorials for kids that let them achieve keyboard competence.

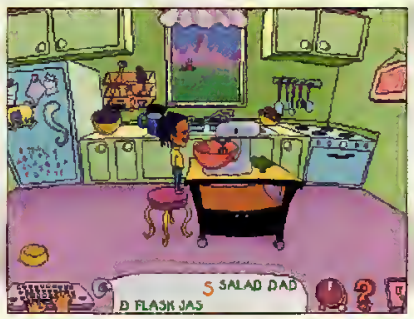
Interplay's **Mario Teaches Typing Enhanced CD-ROM** takes an arcade approach, from the video-game stars in side-scrolling action to the mediocre graphics and repetitious sound track. The program begins with animated scenes that set the stage for the typing drills. The drills send a mentor (choose from Mario, Luigi, or the Princess) racing across the screen, clearing away onscreen letters as they are correctly typed. Players advance through the program's levels, much like a video game, as long as they maintain a certain number of words per minute. Mario may be the best way to get video-game fanatics to face typing lessons. Interplay also sells a scaled-down, floppy-based version of the program. (Interplay Productions; 800-969-4263; DOS/DOS CD, approximately $40)



Arcade fanatics will want Mario and friends to teach them typing.



Move over Mario: Little Mavis and Dizzy are also excellent typing tutors.



As the correct letters are typed, an animated sequence plays.

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing! is the premier name in computer-typing tutorials for adults, and **Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing! for Kids** re-creates the program for children ages 4 to 8. The animated Windows program stars Little Mavis and her dog Dizzy. Kids move Mavis around the beautifully rendered environment of her grandparents' house, where they must help her with various activities, such as making a pie for grandpa's lunch. Typing the right letters, words, or sentences calls up an appropriate animation. For instance, Mavis throws some quince into the pie when the letter *q* is typed. A Discovery mode lets kids play on the keyboard; the Learning mode consists of timed lessons. Little Mavis is a terrific tutor for kids who do well in a richer, more unstructured environment. (The Software Toolworks; 800-231-3088; Windows, $49.95)

—Christine Grech

How to save $190 on a game that costs $85.



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Don't worry if your kid talks to the furniture—it might provide a clue.

The Shadow Knows

Learning the ABCs just got more fun with IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio's The Book of Shadowboxes: A Story of the ABC's. The new CD-ROM for kids 3 to 8 is based upon a lavishly illustrated book by Laura Seeley. The program brings Seeley's beautifully detailed shadowbox drawings to life with delightful animations. (Shadowboxes are a popular folk-art form that consists of a variety of objects placed in a wall-mounted crate or other type of divided box.)

The Book of Shadowboxes features a poem and illustrated shadowbox for each letter of the alphabet. Children can have Shadow—their sweet little blue buddy—read them the poem for each letter, or read it themselves with help whenever they need it. Each letter also has a treasure-hunt game, which encourages players to find items mentioned in the poem and hidden in the shadowbox that begins with the selected letter. The program also includes a built-in paint utility for creating and coloring shadowboxes. (IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio; 800-898-8842; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

—Christine Grech



Shadow helps kids learn the alphabet.

VISIT GAHAN WILSON'S HOUSE

Haunted Hijinks

Frankenstein's monster and his creepy friends hang out in Gahan Wilson's Ultimate Haunted House.

Get ready for some spooky fun when your kids visit **Gahan Wilson's Ultimate Haunted House.** You'll immediately recognize the popular cartoonist's style in the charmingly creepy characters and objects that inhabit the eerie old estate.

Players race against the clock to locate 13 gold keys. They find these keys by collecting strange items (a dead rat, a drum of radioactive stuff, a videotape, a dead fish, and so on) and using them to communicate with the cavalcade of weirdos that haunt the joint. They'll meet Frankenstein's monster, a talking portrait, a schizophrenic ghost named Gahan, a mad scientist, a two-headed crocodile, and a puckish kid who mixes good advice with woeful "uh-ohs" and (here's a hint) likes to eat cheese. All of the house's furniture, appliances, artwork, and pets have an opinion—and sometimes a key—that they are more than happy to share.

Gahan Wilson's Ultimate Haunted House is for kids 8 and older, but big kids will get a big kick out of it, too. (Microsoft Home/Byron Preiss Multimedia; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

—Ann M. Marcus

Even More Monsters



Spot is just one of the amusing residents at My Favorite Monster's house.

If one virtual haunted house isn't enough for your little ghostbusters, introduce 'em to My Favorite Monster. Simon & Schuster Interactive's new children's CD-ROM stars Mooky and six pals who inhabit a six-room home that's chock-full of magical surprises. Designed for kids 4 to 10, My Favorite Monster is well suited to the younger crowd because there's no structured goal. Kids can wander wherever they like, discovering the program's 400 or so animations. Don't worry—the ghoulish gang and its haunted house are never too scary, just lots of fun.

The disc also includes sing-alongs with Mooky, a morphing game, and interviews with Mooky and his friends. My Favorite Monster will be available this fall. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95) *—Christine Grech*

MERCY is a human trait.



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Where nothing is human, mercy is a foreign concept. At Electrocorp, the largest manufacturer of military and industrial robots, there are no humans. And when an evil virus infects, the robots begin their grisly uprising. There is only one way to end the rampant evil: send in an eliminator. You are selected. You are the Cyborg. You must destroy six robots, each equipped with more superior battle skills than the next. When the robots rise, there can be no mercy.



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LIFE IN ANCIENT TIMES

Classic Examples



Wonder how it feels to walk like an Egyptian? Let one of six guides tell you all about it.



Visit the classical era with Microsoft Ancient Lands.

With **Microsoft Ancient Lands,** your kids can take a trip back in time to visit the classic civilizations of Greece, Rome, and Egypt. The disc's humorous approach will make them forget they're learning about history and let them concentrate on having fun.

The People & Politics section is perfect for aspiring governors, young artists will want to head straight for the Monuments & Mysteries tour, and amateur social scientists can satisfy their curiosity with the Work & Play trek.

Each section begins with a textbook-illustration-style screen showing related topics, such as A Craftsman at Work, Food & Drink, or Writing. There is a short narration and a text summary for each topic, and clicking on labeled illustrations and photographs can take kids to related video and audio clips. The unstructured nature of Ancient Lands means that visitors can make a quick trip to find out about a specific topic or stay for a millennium or two. There is plenty to discover within the disc's thousand articles.

For a more organized—and personal—tour of Ancient Lands, kids can engage one of several representative characters as guides. A servant, for instance, gives her perspective on life in the days of Alexander the Great.

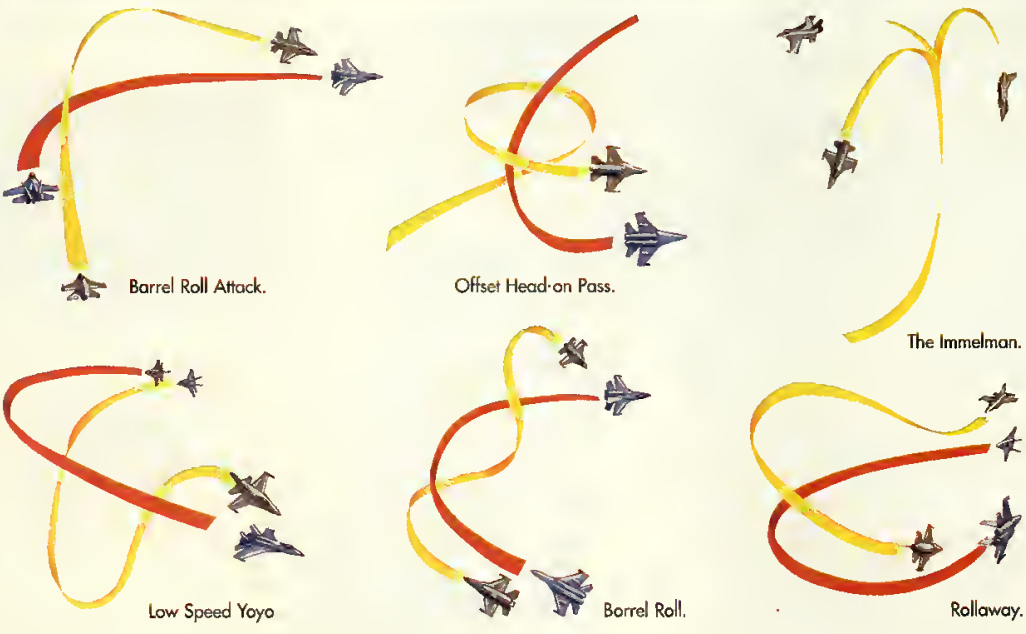
Ancient Lands' interface takes some getting used to. It doesn't work the way most Windows titles do. That's surprising for a Microsoft product. You can't always close pop-up article windows by double-clicking in the upper left corner. Try hitting the Esc key or clicking on the background window instead.

Once kids get used to these idiosyncrasies, they'll be jet-setting from civilization to civilization in no time. Ancient Lands brings the classical era to life, and it's one title that the whole family will enjoy. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

—Christine Grech

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MANEUVERS COMMONLY PERFORMED WITH NEW WINGMAN EXTREME.



On the Way



Does your child have what it takes to become a Geomaster in Project USA?

Computer math programs are popping up everywhere these days, but don't miss **Counting on Frank** from Electronic Arts. Henry and his sidekicks (including his dog Frank) show kids that math really is everywhere—from their clothes closet to the bathroom! For ages 8 to 11, Counting on Frank teaches word problems; fractions, percentages, and decimals; compound equations; geometry; measurements; and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Look for it this fall. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4325; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

■

Gus the lovable dog is back in the second release of Modern Media Ventures' Gus and the CyberBuds Learning Adventure series. The sequel to Gus Goes to Cybertown, **Gus Goes to Cyberopolis** helps kids 3 and up learn vocabulary, language, dictionary usage, scientific experimentation, and premath, among other skills. Kids explore Cyberopolis with Gus as they search for CyberBuds, knowledgeable friends who reward them with fun and teach them things. As they roam the town, they check out the library, post office, science dome, aquarium, restaurant, and subway. (Modern Media Ventures; 800-530-5080; Win/Mac CD, $49.95)



Moving on from Cybertown, Gus hits the big city in his next title.

■

Budding astronomers will want to train their telescopes on **Astronomica: The Quest for the Edge of the Universe.** Hyper-Quest's new CD-ROM science-discovery game for ages 9 and up teaches players about astronomy as they solve a mystery that just may reveal the secret of the universe. The game is set in a mountaintop observatory and features photo-realistic 3-D graphics. The program also includes an astronomy trivia game and a reference encyclopedia. (Hyper-Quest; 800-554-9737; Win/Mac CD, $69.95)

■

More-grounded kids may want to try their hands at becoming Geomasters. In **Project USA** from Impressions Software, kids 8 to 13 can attain this rank by earning enough points in four areas: the Atlas, where they use maps; the Compare section, where they work with information about a state, such as the economy and climate; Flying Mode, where they cross time zones; and Games, where they learn trivia and fun facts. (Impressions Software; 617-225-0500; DOS CD, $49.95)

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something along the way.

discover and learn at their own pace (which, any parent will tell you, can approach the speed of light).

To purchase a toy that will never grow old, visit the software retailer nearest you. Or, order directly from GTE by calling 1800 GTE TODAY. Customer representatives will be happy to answer any questions or send you a brief video* on the products. Of course, no video can compare to an interactive disk, but that's the whole point, isn't it?

interactive TOYS™





Game On

Corey Sandler

Blonde Ambition

It's been a long, long time since I played the singles scene. So I went out and picked the prettiest dress I could find.

Now, if you take a glance at the picture of the handsome, bearded dude at the top of the page, you may start to wonder about my sense of self. Let me assure you: It was all in the line of duty.

I was an online lurker at the ImagiNation Network (INN), a mostly games service with about 40,000 members. INN is distinguished by its lush landscape of areas to visit, including MedievaLand for role-playing games; SierraLand, an electronic amusement park with multiplayer action and arcade games; and CasinoLand, a password-protected "adults only" gambling hall and metaphorical cocktail lounge.

Among INN's contributions to the online environment is the requirement that players create an on-screen image of themselves. You pick hair color and style, eyes, nose, mouth, and clothing. Oh, and a name and your choice of gender.

Online services have become an electronic gathering of cross-dressing, age-altering, income-inflating lounge lizards.

Whether it was intentional or not, that capability has turned INN into an electronic gathering of cross-dressing, age-altering, income-inflating lounge lizards—in other words, an online equivalent of a smoky, dark bar on a Saturday night.

To take a look at what goes on there, I created Pisces—as fishy a name as ever there was—to be your basic 19-year-old blonde bikini beauty.

It was Saturday night—date night—and Pisces headed for the blackjack tables of CasinoLand.

I was picked up almost immediately by Walkieyer (named, he said, after the lead singer of an obscure British band that hasn't even released an album in the U.S.), Big Red Man (a fan of computers, country music, and beer), and a most gentlemanly Air Force officer who went by the name of Crazy. Of course, all or none of these descriptions may have been true—I was as phony as a three-dollar bill. How could I be sure of anyone else?



Going online can change everything.

Dita interrupted: "Any of you ladies bi? I am but do not show it on my 'toon because of all the male pretenders." Why didn't I believe her/him?

Dragaur messaged with what he must have thought would be a witty pickup line: "Pisces, can I heat your Aries water?"

"I don't get it," I replied.

"I'm an Aries. I take it you're a Pisces. Aries is fire and Pisces is water."

A girl doesn't want to be too deflating to the male ego, of course, so I didn't point out that Aries is actually a ram and Pisces a fish.

Before we could go on with our scintillating exchange of misinformation, I was accosted by a charming fellow who called himself Big One. He wanted to know if I liked, er, big ones. I muted him immediately—the electronic equivalent of a gin and tonic in the face.

But chivalry does live online: In the midst of a poker game, KC offered me chips when I pleaded poverty. He bet heavily and then folded his hands to me. The poor guy even gave me the equivalent of a polite peck on the cheek at the end of a get-to-know-you date: "We don't get as many online as cool...and definitely pretty...as you." I blushed right through my beard.

Now, I don't mean to pick on the ImagiNation Network. People put on poses in almost everything they do: at work, in social situations, and at play. Online transformations occur on all the electronic services; it's just that INN's pictures naturally place an increased emphasis on gender.

To keep the digital cocktail lounge in perspective, INN is doing a lot of interesting things to bolster its appeal to younger players. Early next year the service will unveil new additions, including a "Cyberplex" of edutainment games and an online version of Dynamix's Front Page Sports: Football.

Anyhow, the remainder of the evening was relatively uneventful. I continued to play some rather low-quality poker with Roxanne (who kept telling everybody, "I'm new, so be gentle") until a person by the name of TungnGroov cleaned us out quickly and then prepared to move on to fleece new sheep.

"Winning everything and then running away can get you shot in some games," I offered. Tung answered right away: "Trust me...I'm not the kind of guy you should kid about shooting at."

Ooooh, sex and violence...I'm not that kind of girl.

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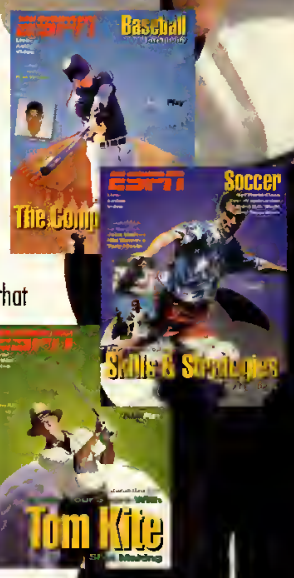
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Tube Man

Keith Ferrell

Betting On Interactivity

What are the odds that interactive TV gaming will involve gaming in its traditional sense? I mean, of course, gambling, and I'd wager the odds are pretty good.

Place your bets, ladies and gentlemen. Put your money on the line. Spin the wheel, roll the dice, deal the cards, change the channel.

There are plenty of reasons to look for gambling on TV, but the key is that we simply like to gamble. We like gambling almost as much as we like watching television. The success of Las Vegas and Atlantic City is quickly being overshadowed by the growth of reservation gambling halls and riverboat casinos in regions where gambling has traditionally been illegal. Gleaming video poker machines and video slot machines accommodate the gambling impulse in areas that won't tolerate table games.

Every step we take along the path to fully legalized gambling makes the move toward interactive televised gambling a little easier, a little more evolutionary, a little less epochal. Already, online gambling for play money does well on a number of services. Televised lottery drawings attract huge numbers of viewers every week. The only thing missing from the network coverage of the Kentucky Derby is a pari-mutuel window in the upper left corner of the screen. Adding a point spread and a bet button to "Monday Night Football" shouldn't tax the technology that much. Gambling is coming, so let's take a look at the forms it might take.

How long will it be before you see a point spread and a "bet" button on the "Monday Night Football" screen?

What sorts of gambling games are we likely to see first? Bingo is a good bet. Maybe keno. These games are simple to handle for large numbers of players, and they could be implemented without much technological overhead. Beyond that, it won't be long until more traditional gambling appears on TV. How large a step is it, after all, from the video poker machines in bar and restaurant casinos to video poker played from the couch at home? A slot machine in every living room? Rabbit Jack's Casino for real jack. Why not?

Then look for the lines between entertainment television and gambling TV begin to blur.

Imagine being able to deal yourself into a hot and heavy poker game against players scattered around the country. Or against algorithms representing the great players of all time. How about mixing gambling with popular TV shows or movies? Stud poker with Bret Maverick. *Chemin de fer* with James Bond. Put yourself in the movies and make the stakes real money.

Obviously the moralists will have some objections. There will be plenty of public outcry. Vegas, Atlantic City, and the Native American casino community will object to the threat to their revenues. The lawyers and legislators will get involved as well. Whole new areas of litigation and interstate regulation will be raised. If I can't gamble in my home state, will I be able to gamble by cable delivered from an out-of-state source?

But those are details, and judicious sharing of revenue by the game producers will address some of them.

Some of the objections are undoubtedly well founded. Video poker has wreaked economic devastation in some areas of the country, with thousands if not tens of thousands of cases of addiction to the machines. A large part of the population is already hooked on TV; give them a chance to make—or lose—money from their addiction, and Mr. Jones is only going to grow more powerful.



ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON STUDER

Figure on some sort of system to ensure—or at least help ensure—that too many people don't go bankrupt or fall into too much debt too quickly. Perhaps cash drawing accounts will be established with your local cable provider, or your state's TV gaming commission.

But there will be heartbreak; there will be lives ruined, homes lost, futures destroyed. That's why they call it gambling. But think of it this way: The Gambling Channel, or whatever it's called, will also serve as a terrific source of new stories for "Hard Copy," "60 Minutes," "Dateline," "Now," and all the rest. You can bet on it.

Keith Ferrell is editor of OMNI, *editorial director of General Media Online Services, and science and technology editor for* Penthouse, *each of which covers the interactive revolution in its own way.*

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Multimaniac

Paul Bonner

How My PC Sent Me Soaring

First there was Icarus. Then the Hindenburg. And now, in the latest expression of man's unquenchable desire to trounce the friendly skies, we have The Greatest Paper Airplanes for Windows from the aptly named KittyHawk Software.

Perhaps you're surprised to see the paper airplane, the ultimate low-tech toy, make its way to Windows, but the Multimaniac has been waiting for this. Why, back when I was just a scrawny little tyke making primitive flying machines out of pages ripped from library books, I used to tell my playmates, "Someday we'll do this all on computers."

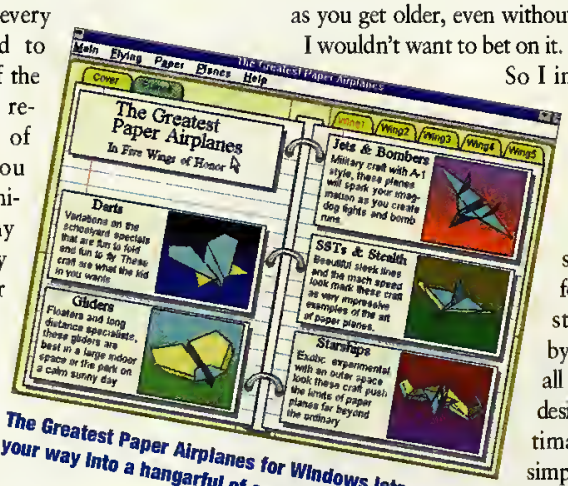
They laughed at me, of course, but I knew I was right. And now the time has come.

To live up to a name like The Greatest Paper Airplanes for Windows, you've got to do more than show up. You've got to make terrific paper airplanes, and you've got to do it in a way that makes proper use of Windows. That's exactly what this nifty little program does.

The Greatest Paper Airplanes for Windows is some pretty terrific technology in pursuit of a pretty trivial purpose. But so what?

Paper Airplanes provides all the instructions you need to fold 25 different paper airplanes—from the schoolyard classic Hammerhead to the Concorde-like Puma and the experimental starship Neptune. It can print designs for any of these planes, and the box comes stuffed with 50 preprinted planes ready to fold and fly.

Paper Airplanes takes advantage of Windows with wonderful, high-speed animations that demonstrate the process of folding each and every plane design. The animations cover every fold you need to make—some of the fancier planes require dozens of them—and you can stop the animation at any point and freely rotate the paper or zoom in to see the details of a fold more clearly. The program also gives you snazzy multimedia histories of flight and paper making.



The Greatest Paper Airplanes for Windows lets you fold your way into a hangarful of aeronautical inventions.

You might think that Paper Airplanes is some pretty terrific technology in pursuit of a pretty trivial purpose. But so what? It's a lot of fun. The program's other animations—ranging from buzzing wasps (the first paper makers) to an airborne paper airplane hitting its thrower in the nose (you've got to be careful when you launch a pointy object into space, the program repeatedly warns)—are downright funny, and the accompanying sound effects (wasps buzzing, nose-owner ouching, and so on) are top-notch.

As with all good multimedia, though, there's a serious purpose behind Paper Airplanes. It wants to help you make better paper airplanes. That's what attracted me to it in the first place, and that's what all the information about flight and aerodynamics and airplane design that it presents is intended to do.

If the truth be told, I needed the help. My early paper-airplane-making efforts typically ended up looking like messy wads of scrap paper, and they dropped like rocks as soon as I let 'em fly. And while I suppose that paper planes might be one of those things—like sex or carpentry—that you get better at as you get older, even without any practice, I wouldn't want to bet on it.

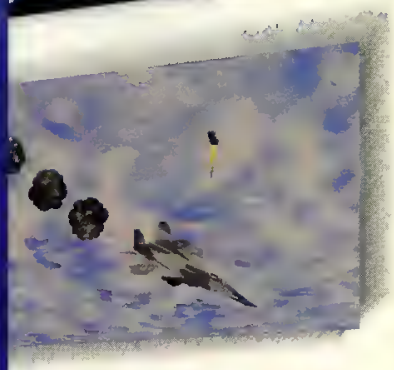
So I installed Paper Airplanes' two disks, studied its dozens of information screens, and followed its instructions fold by fold through all 25 of its plane designs. The Multimaniac got the simple ones flying in no time, but the more complex origamilike efforts taxed even my prodigious design capacities.

But with the help of Paper Airplanes, I was able to master even the tricky planes. Right now, I'm watching my notepaper Concorde fly loop-de-loops 'round the Multimaniac's office. It's been going for about 20 minutes now, riding the thermals rising from the office radiator, and it's so perfectly aerodynamic that it doesn't show any signs of stopping. Meanwhile, I'm perfecting a Dart-like design that should peak at about 93 mph—which is pretty damn close to the theoretical limit for a standard 8½-by-11-inch notebook page.

Of course, Paper Airplanes can't promise you the same results for your $40 investment—the Multimaniac, after all, has a gift for these things—but it's sure to deliver the proverbial hours of fun. (KittyHawk Software; 800-388-9622; Windows, $39.95)

U.S. NAVY FIGHTERS™

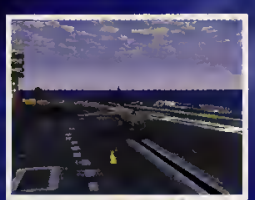




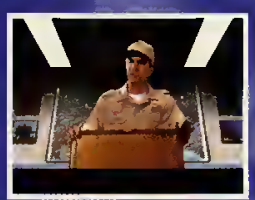
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Natural Born

The incredible popularity of the original Doom has spawned a bewildering array of sequels, competitors, improvements, and imitations.

Face it—we're Doomed.

There's no getting around it. Id Software's Doom—or one of its many conceptual offspring—will get you, somehow, somewhere.

More than a game, Doom is a phenomenon. Every computer-game developer on the planet seems to be preparing a Doom-like game in which players run through dimly lit, smooth-scrolling, three-dimensional hallways populated by a variety of hideous enemies with dark thoughts and the ordinance to express them.

These so-called Doom Killers are most plentiful for PCs, but you'll find them almost everywhere. The Mac is Doomed. 3DO and Sega CD are Doomed, too.

It all began back in 1992, when Apogee released Id Software's Wolfenstein 3-D, with its 3-D effects and smooth scrolling. Players saw Wolf's game world—a German castle where your character was being held prisoner—as the character saw it, and moved through it in a graphically detailed yet smooth-flowing fashion that was almost like walking. You opened doors; you blasted Nazi guards who spurted blood and screamed; you collected ammo, bigger guns, treasure and restoratives; and you searched for the elevator to the next floor.

It was violent—in a cartoon-like way—and it was satisfying. Most of all, it was fun.

Doom was the natural follow-up to Wolfenstein. The basic game is the same, but Doom is a darker, more realistic, and much more harrowing world populated by unearthly monsters. The lights flicker or go out entirely. Secret rooms and elusive puzzles abound. Your character rises and falls as he strides through the corridors. You can follow stairs up to dizzying summits or down into deep grottos.

It's even more violent. It's even more satisfying. And it's even more fun.

It is so much fun that people don't want it to end. And so they've created Doom editors to alter and add to the game. With hundreds, if not thousands, of new user-created Doom levels (you can even blow away Barney in a couple of them) packing the online services, Doom became immortal.

But it still isn't enough. This fall, Id is releasing Doom II, complete with a host of new levels and new horrors. And a second generation of Doom-inspired action games—from LucasArts' Dark Forces to Apogee's Duke Nukem 3D—are building a ring of new features and capabilities around a Doom-esque core.

And that's only the beginning. Id has already started development of the much-anticipated third generation of Doom, called Quake, which will use an entirely new engine designed to out-Doom Doom.

To help you sort through the rubble, we've assembled info on 19 Doom wanna-be's and clones. You'll find 'em all here—from the hottest "beyond Doom" titles such as System Shock, to the best demon-blasting alternatives for the Mac.

So take a deep breath. And enjoy your Doom.

BY PETER OLAFSON

ILLUSTRATION BY CONRAD WEISS

Doom Killers





A skeletal opponent approaches from the depths of Doom II.

A Second Chance at Doomsday

Doom II: Hell on Earth is to Doom as Spear of Destiny was to Wolfenstein 3-D—an evolutionary change rather than a revolutionary one. This commercial follow-up to Id's shareware phenomenon of 1993 consists of 30 new levels of monsters, mayhem, and gore, and is essentially Doom plus more.



More monsters to kill in Doom II. Some you'll recognize; some you won't.

That isn't a criticism. More Doom will satisfy a whole lot of people. It will challenge them, too. The new game seems a bit tougher than the original—at least at the Ultra Violence level.

The 3-D graphics haven't changed dramatically, but the details have been recast. Your opponents now include a chaingun-toting fat man (who comes apart in splendidly sloppy fashion, leaving his gun behind); a shambling, skeletonlike horror with twin shoulder-mounted rocket launchers; a horned Caco Demon cousin that spits flam-





Bits o' Doom

With dozens of Doom clones already hitting the market and a slew more headed for the shelves shortly, it would be impossible to cover all your options. But if you haven't seen something that piques your interest, there are other fish to fry (and demons to vaporize).

Heretic, from Id, will remind you of Doom—and it should. This stepbrother to the original was developed by Raven Software using Id's Doom engine, and Raven has created a beautiful game. Even the weapons look wonderful, with green light streaking from a magical crossbow and lightning arcing from silvery gloves.

When you get over the good looks, stay for the game. Raven has incorporated a look up/look down feature; the ability to fly; a new, more detailed automap; an inventory of artifacts; and a new stat bar that lists kills.

CyClones, from Strategic Simulations, was also developed by the folks at Raven, but it uses different technology. It's pretty, like all Raven games, but this time you need to aim your weapon, rather than just open up in the enemy's general direction.



Heretic enhances Doom with a bit of magic.

Corridor 7 CD-ROM from Capstone is a respectable futuristic Wolfenstein game with enhancements such as animated wall tiles. And the CD edition is a huge upgrade to the original, with 10 more levels; support for network and head-to-head play; teleporters; and new graphics, sounds, and weapons.



Time for some claw-to-claw combat in CyClones.

U.S. Gold's In Extremis (Latin for "about to die") sends you exploring a drifting space lab. Your scanners show no human life aboard. However, there are gobs of green, pointy-headed—and unfriendly—alien life.

And there's more to getting around than simply having the right keycard. Code-locked boxes containing invaluable supplies are scattered around the lab, and you have to track down the combinations to open them.

Expert Software's **Terminal Terror** is another great game. This mission-based counter-terrorist scenario is a follow-up to Lethal Tender but looks better (although there's still room for improvement), moves more smoothly, and plays more easily. If you kill civilians, you get dumped into a free-scrolling prison cell. And don't shoot your commander by mistake; he shoots back.

Meanwhile, Readysoft is projecting a February release for **BrainDead 13**, a comedy/horror/action/adventure on CD-ROM for the PC, Mac, 3DO, Sega CD, and Atari Jaguar. The game casts you as a computer repairman who discovers that his house call at a dark, secluded mansion is, in fact, facilitating a disembodied brain's scheme to take over the world's computer network.

Finally, **The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki**, published by Merit Software, is a knife-in-tongue, tongue-in-cheek action game that's as fun as it is funny. Radiaki puts you in a 30-level maze and gives you the opportunity to bash a Fidel Castro-look-alike and tangle with a high-rent incarnation of Rosie the Robot.



ing skulls; miniature spider demons; and an amorphous blob that makes up for its lack of speed with cannons at the ends of both arms.

Even spookier and more monstrous things lurk deeper in the game. Doom II introduces the concept of resurrection—the critter you left for dead ten minutes ago may be back, and tweaked monster artificial intelligence means he may be even harder to hit this time around.

Fortunately, you're also better equipped. Doom II introduces a great new weapon: an improved double-barreled shotgun with a wonderful dispersal radius and reloading animation. It delivers an instantaneous, life-denying blow to whatever unfortunate low- to mid-level baddie is standing in front of it.

The levels—now laid out in one straight shot rather than three episodes—are cleanly designed but don't sparkle quite as much as they did in Doom. The really fresh ideas that made the first Doom so much fun seem to be missing here.

Then again, it's still Doom, with all that the name implies. And it's new. No Doom fanatic will find anything wrong with this game that a night holed up behind the shotgun with a bag of Cheetos and a two-liter bottle of Diet Coke won't cure. Reload, and move out.

A Shock to the System

I loved System Shock from the moment I started it, and I can't put my finger on one single reason; every time I try, three other equally persuasive ones come along. System Shock uses technology from Ultima Underworld to stand head and shoulders above the me-too Doom clones.

System Shock has the story that Doom so badly lacks, deftly integrated into the game via computer logs, e-mail snippets, and data fragments. Yup, it's the old rogue-computer-takes-over-space-station scenario. It's not new, and certainly is nothing that Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock couldn't have worked out. But it doesn't feel old or tired.

The game also offers the first persuasive approximation of cyberspace—your consciousness floats in an alternate universe of wire-framed, polygonal worlds linked by tunnels—and integrates it splendidly with the meat of the game. For instance, you may have to go into cyberspace to open a reluctant door.

System Shock has atmosphere so thick you could cut it with a laser. It's quiet and menacing, and if you imagine now and



In System Shock, the computer has taken over. How are you going to get out of here?

Meet MacDoom

Still think of the Macintosh as a nice, quiet, politically correct computer for artistic types? Think again. Doom clones are rapidly bringing violence and mayhem to the world of the one-button mouse.

Marathon

Bungie Software, the folks behind the Mac's first free-scrolling, first-person 3-D action game, Pathways into Darkness, aim to outdo themselves with Marathon. Panicky crew members run through the halls and down the stairs screaming, "They're everywhere!" ("They" meaning aliens.) The ability to look up and down is quickly going to become as common as running in Doomlike games, but it's nice to be able to dodge (and glance) left and right. Networked Mac gamers will even be able to use their microphones during multiplayer sessions. Marathon boasts another subtle feature, too: When you miss, you can see and hear your bullets ricochet.



The Aliens are on a rampage in Bungie's slick new Marathon.

Sensory Overload

This one's not up to Marathon's level, but it's still an adequate action-adventure. Patience is a virtue, because it takes a while to get going. You have to make your way out of a building taken over by terrorists and escape into the caves below. Once there—and plunged in darkness—the game begins to generate some real excitement. The gadgets are great, including a walkie-talkie that lets you listen in on the bad guys' plans. Sensory Overload doesn't put those clever devices to enough use, though, and play can be slow and mechanical even on a Quadra, though the game is accelerated for the Power Mac.



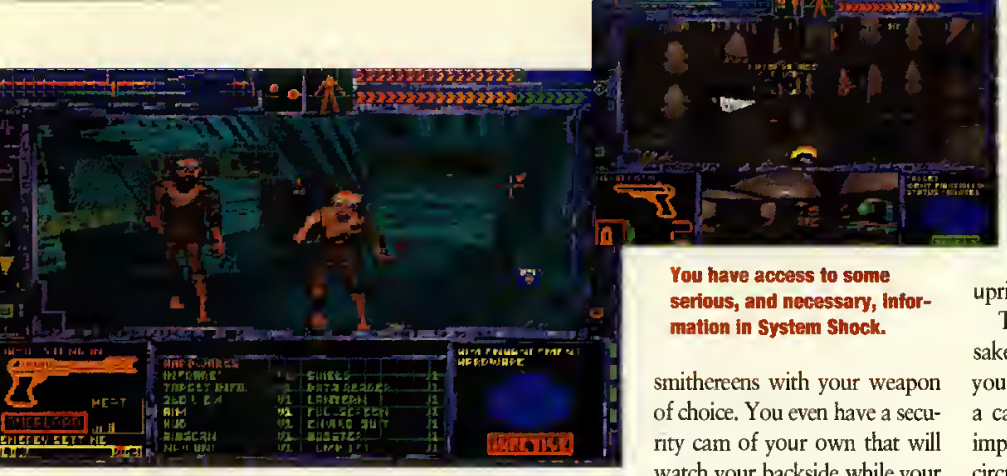
Terrorists dominate in the innovative, but slow-paced, Sensory Overload.

Wolfenstein 3-D

Achtung! Mac Wolfenstein started out as shareware, but now it's getting the commercial treatment. In fact, it's getting three of them. The 1st Encounter ($5.95) includes the first three shareware levels, the 2nd Encounter ($14.95) has the next 27 levels, and the 3rd Encounter ($24.95) consists of the next 60 levels originally from the PC version. And Wolfenstein 3-D for the Mac (expected to cost about $50 when it ships in December) will include all 90 levels. If the new levels measure up to the PC version and MacPlay can beef up the speed a bit, those Germans are going to have their hands full.



The classic Wolfenstein finds new life on the Macintosh.



You have access to some serious, and necessary, information in System Shock.

Horribly disfigured mutants await in System Shock—and they aren't happy to see you.

then that you are being watched, it is probably because you are. Security cameras are everywhere, and you can blow them to smithereens with your weapon of choice. You even have a security cam of your own that will watch your backside while your frontside is engaged in other tasks.

To bash the security cameras, you'll have to look up at them. Yes, System Shock has the look-up and look-down, ducking, jumping, and climbing features that you'd expect in a second-generation Doom-style game, but it also offers the ability to shift your posture—slouching or crouching on one leg—so that you can reach places that a person walking upright could not.

The puzzles don't exist simply for puzzles' sake, either. Even if they look like something you'd give kids to keep them occupied during a car ride, you're really performing some important task, such as completing a crucial circuit or destabilizing the power that runs a machine.

There doesn't seem to be anything you can't click on to elicit a description, even if it's just a particular type of wall tile. And while clearly of enormous scope, the game

The Many Levels of Doom

Not since Mah Jong and Harpoon has a PC game tapped so richly into user creativity. Doom is only about a year old, but hundreds—if not thousands—of user-created levels adorn bulletin board systems and online services around the world.

That means the game never has to end, but finding artfully realized levels to play amid the vast online stacks of good and not-so-good Doom stuff can be difficult.

So here's an annotated list of can't-put-them-down levels for those who can't get enough. Look for them in the gaming forums on online services such as CompuServe and America Online, or poke around the alt.games.doom newsgroup on the Internet.



The critters don't like you in Alien Doom, either.



Those may not be Imperial stormtroopers, but the setting of Star Wars 2 sure looks familiar.



It's time to make JL3 look like a scene from *The Towering Inferno*.

Star Wars 2

Modeled after the Death Star, this authentic two-level episode is tough going, but in a fair-minded and immaculate way. And it takes full advantage of the pleasures of exploration, the impossible odds, and the sense of multiple decks.

Alien Doom

This huge, nine-level episode replaces many of the Doom monster graphics with critters from the *Alien* films and uses sampled movie sounds that occasionally turn heat-of-combat profane. The presence of a strong theme and the pure ambition of the project is perhaps more impressive than the levels themselves. But as Ripley says, "Let's ROOOOCCCKKKK!"

Yak World

You get pummeled by a pack of demons right at the start. Running for cover is your only option, but that takes you to a serious precipice. You can jump, but pray you hit the narrow central path or you'll be lunch for the nasties in the adjacent pits. After that, it gets even worse.

JL3

This is a classically simple, memorable Doom design. The Baron-topped tower near the start is an especially nice touch. Set off the explosive drums at the top and watch the fur fly.

Laura Beyer Demo: Is This House Haunted?

The answer is yes. This level sets you down outside a wonderfully rambling mansion richly endowed with creepy atmosphere and secret areas. New graphics include four-poster beds, bookshelves, working fireplaces, and a pool table. Mixing with the standard Doom critters is an odd muttering guy wearing overalls and toting a shotgun.

SFG

Huge-room scenarios have been overdone—but the murderous one that opens SFG is especially well conceived. It also gives you a good close-up encounter with the Spider Demon, which you may not have had a good look at in the original Doom.



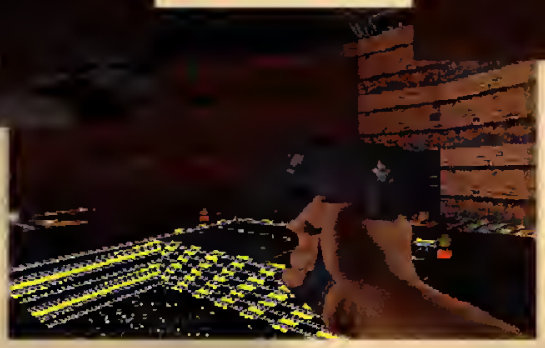
The Apogee of Entertainment

Shareware-maker extraordinaire Apogee didn't stop supplying the 3D goods with Wolfenstein and Blake Stone. Instead, it started up a new division for games created with its proprietary technology.

Even better, the company is developing two new game engines, called "Build" and PolyTex, which should have even more impact. The first four "Build" games—Duke Nukem 3D, Shadow Warrior, Ruins, and Blood—are due next year. These games may be the true Doom killers. PolyTex games won't appear until 1996.



Say "Fork you!" to a terrifying collection of ghouls in Blood.



Duke Nukem 3D gives you a Duke's-eye view of a futuristic Los Angeles that's even more terrifying than the real thing.

Duke Nukem 3D belongs right up there with Dark Forces and System Shock—and Doom II, of course.

This latest version of Duke is something really special. Duke 3D takes Apogee's celebrated Duke Nukem character and places him in a futuristic Los Angeles that has been turned into a gigantic prison.

Even in pre-release versions, the game's levels look fantastic. Duke must run, fly, and blast his way through everything from an orbiting space station to an eerie subway system to the entire City of Angels. The details of the world are astounding. You can shatter plate glass windows, board subway cars, and don jet packs. The blacked-out insides of some buildings will haunt me long after the computer has been switched off. And then there's the earthquake!



Stars replace shotguns in the world of Shadow Warrior.

Apogee has more tricks up its long sleeves, too. Sbadow Warrior probably will be the second "Build" game. The game is lush in color, Eastern in motif, and vaguely Doom-ish in feel—but it is entirely its own creature. Some possible images are astounding: a stone cube bobs on a sea of lava; firelight flickers across the face of a photo-realistic Buddha; a service tunnel is lit with a delicate, hummingbird-like flicker.

The Indiana Jones-ish Ruins will use the new technology to create an Egyptian feel with incredibly detailed hieroglyphics and a very caustic flame-thrower. Finally, Blood equips your character with a pitchfork and might just place him in a very creepy cemetery. Based on an early showing, Blood should be the best-looking game of its type.

If you can't wait for "Build," this fall Apogee will release two final games using enhanced versions of its Wolfenstein technology. Rise of the Triad started out as the follow-up to Wolfenstein 3-D but Apogee added some Doomlike features that change its look and feel. Dauntingly huge, it will use digitized images of Apogee staffers as the enemies.

Blake Stone: Planetstrike is basically 20 more levels of Blake Stone. New graphics, a zoom feature for the automap, lighting effects, and floor and ceiling textures should furnish a good time for Blake fans until the new stuff arrives.

has a very tightly knit design. There's always some cramped corridor to descend, some overlooked door to peer through, some flicker of movement on the periphery.

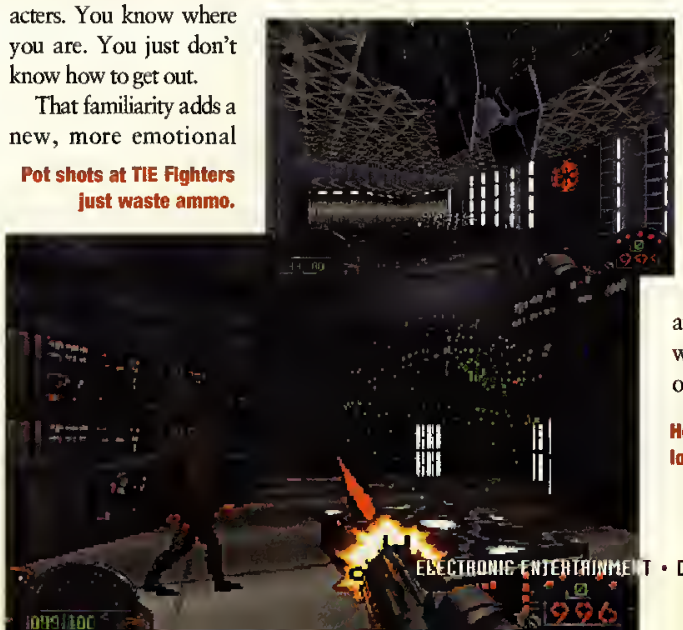
The Ultima Underworld engine may have been System Shock's starting point, but this is a world all its own—one you won't want to leave.

LucasArts' Shot in the Dark

Dark Forces draws on the *Star Wars* story to set the stage for its Doom-like action. That connection may make Dark Forces the most potent Doom Killer in this or any galaxy.

Set just prior to the original *Star Wars* movie, Dark Forces instantly forges a link to the heroic mythology built up by three incredibly successful movies and a whole shelf of novels. You know the story. You know the characters. You know where you are. You just don't know how to get out.

That familiarity adds a new, more emotional dimension to the mayhem. Doom's demons are anonymous. These guys, on the other hand, are *Imperial stormtroopers*. They work for *Darth Vader*. You're not just saving your skin, you're helping the Rebel Alliance—Luke, Han, Chewie, and that cute princess with the honey buns over her ears.



Pot shots at TIE Fighters just waste ammo.

Hey, that hologram looks familiar.



A variety of menacing obstacles block your way in Descent.

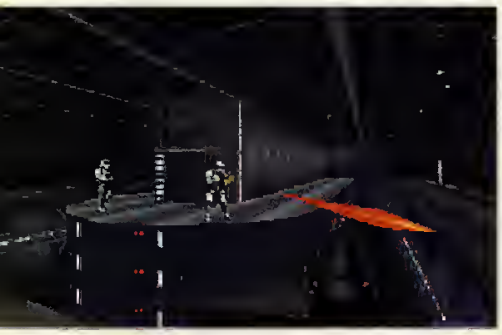


Rescue trapped miners, then scramble for the exit.

Dark Forces does a good job of recreating the *Star Wars* environment. In most Doom Killers, you are the only trigger for events, and the world does not wake up until you fire a gun or cross a line. You'll sense Dark Forces' difference when the first stormtrooper spots you and yells to his comrades. The suggestion of events proceeding without you goes a long way toward helping you suspend disbelief.

But that's not the only improvement in Dark Forces. The game also employs ducking, jumping, crawling, and climbing. Most importantly, you now have to *aim* at your targets, and that includes aiming up or down, too—a feature not included in Doom.

You can't actually gun down Darth, of course: The *Star Wars* mythology demands he keep a few later appointments. But you do get to wreak hot laser death upon legions of stormtroopers decked out in their trademark white ceramic armor. The Force is definitely with Dark Forces. (For more information on Dark Forces, see the preview in the October 1994 issue, page 84.)



Stormtroopers add familiar foes to your fight.

Going Down with Descent

Not every Doom-style game is a pure clone. Descent, from Interplay, mingles that familiar claustrophobic environment and first-person perspective with pure shoot-'em-up action. It's not like playing an arcade game, it's like being inside one.

The result is a very different sort of Doom-killer—one that's lighter, breezier, almost charming in its own way.

It's hard to know whether to call Descent Doom-with-a-jet-pack or a closed-environment flight sim—so let's call it both. Imagine, if you will, flying an aircraft through a mine shaft, dueling with other craft, rescuing miners and collecting the good things that keep the little aircraft happy and in the air—all the while using keycards to open locked doors in a mad search for the exit.



Great explosions highlight the descent into Descent.

In other words, Descent is Doom with your feet off the ground. In Doom, if you came to a precipice without any promising openings on the other side, you'd have to count it as a dead end and move on to something else. But in Descent, you just point your craft's nose into the abyss, fly down the hole, and keep going.

The ability to fly means that despite all the locked doors, Descent feels less restricted than Doom. You can lose your bearings easily, because the world isn't flat. It's twisty and gnarled, with bumps and loops in the mine corridors. And you can move not only left and right but up and down. You'll often wind up flying upside down, or turned at a 90-degree angle. You'll be lucky to know which way is up, but vertigo has never been more fun.

Where to Find Your Doom

Blake Stone: Planetstrike; Apogee Software; 800-426-3123; DOS, $39.95

Blood (early '95); Apogee Software; 800-426-3123; DOS, (not yet priced)

BrainDead 13; Readysoft; 905-475-4801; DOS; (not yet priced)

Corridor 7 CD-ROM; Capstone; 800-468-7226; DOS, $59.95

CyClones; Strategic Simulations; 800-245-4525; DOS, (not yet priced)

Descent; Interplay; 800-969-4263; 800-TK; DOS, (not yet priced)

Doom II; GT Software; 800-332-4300; DOS, $69.95

Duke Nukem 3D (early '95); Apogee Software; 800-426-3123; DOS, (not yet priced)

Fortress of Dr. Radiaki, Merit Software; 800-238-4277; DOS, $59.95

Heretic; Id Software; 800-434-2637; DOS, (not yet priced)

In Extremis; U.S. Gold; (available via mail-order retailers only)

Marathon; Bungie Software; 312-563-6200; Mac, $69.99

Rise of the Triad; Apogee Software; 800-426-3123; DOS, (not yet priced)

Ruins; (early '95) Apogee Software ; 800-426-3123; DOS, (not yet priced)

Sensory Overload; Reality Bytes; 617-621-1555; Mac, $44.95

Shadow Warrior (early '95); Apogee Software; 800-426-3123; DOS, (not yet priced)

System Shock; Origin Software; 800-245-4525; DOS, approximately $60

Terminal Terror; Expert Software; 800-759-2562; DOS (not yet priced)

Wolfenstein 3-D for Mac; MacPlay; 800-736-5738; Mac, approximately $50

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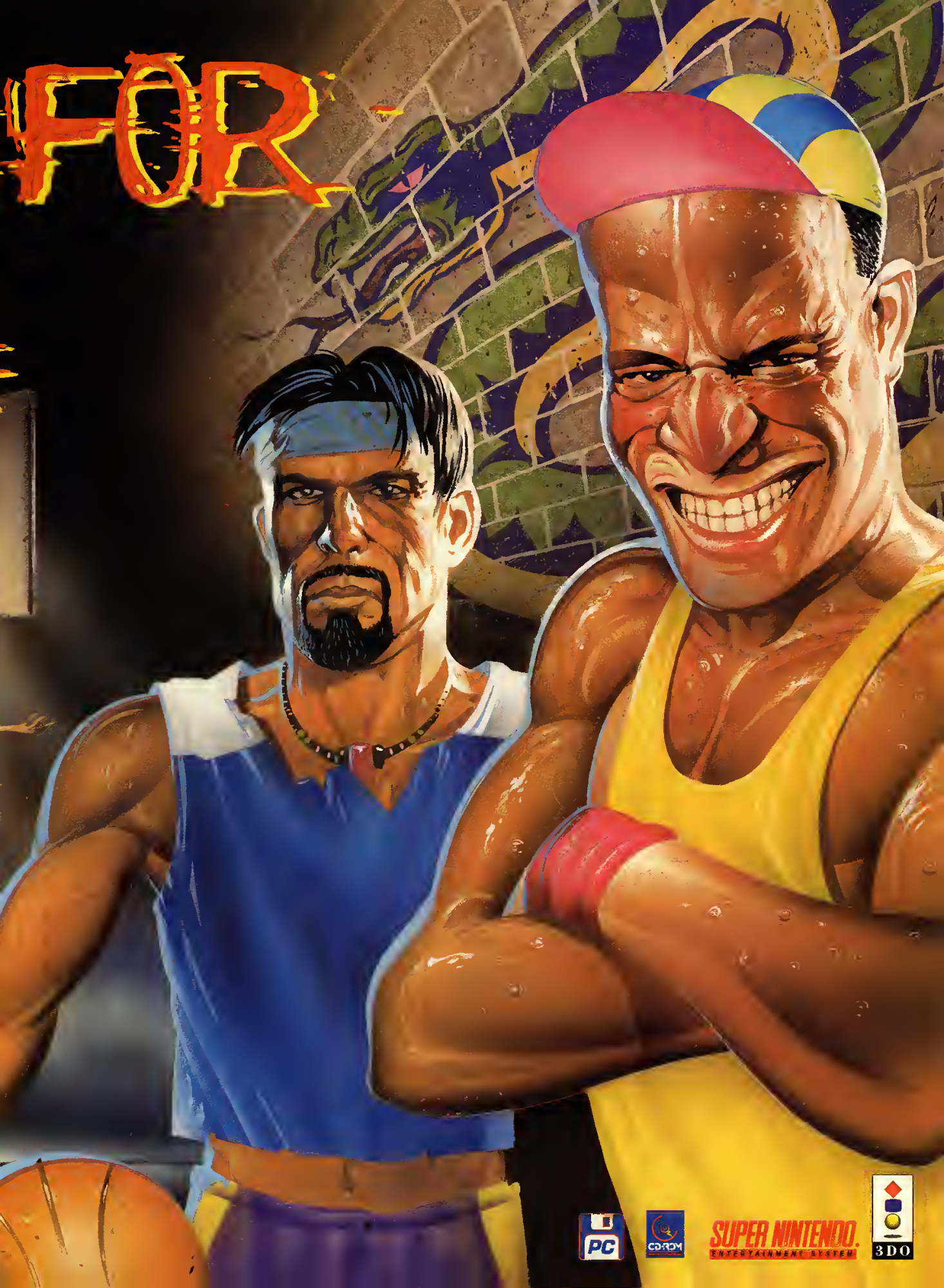
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Wing Commander III

The latest installment in the Wing Commander series adds live action to the popular space-battle game.

By Bill Meyer

When it comes to fast-action space operas, the Wing Commander series from Origin Systems has always been a trendsetter. Hold on to your joystick, because Wing Commander III is about to redefine the genre once again.

You'll still find the impeccable cinematic detail, compelling plot lines, sophisticated characters, and high-powered space-battle simulation you've come to expect. But forget animation—the new version uses real video and a star-studded cast of live actors. (Of course, the space battle sequences at the core of the game have also been improved—see "Flying Time," on page 71.)

Mark Hamill, best known as Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars*, is the player's alter ego—veteran pilot Colonel Christopher Blair of the Terran Confederation. Malcolm McDowell, star of *A Clockwork Orange*, *Cat People*, and countless other films, plays Admiral Tolwyn. He's been dogging Blair since the bloody feud between mankind and the lionlike Kilrathi developed in the original Wing Commander back in 1990.

Jason Bernard, whom you'll recognize as the easily irritated boss on Fox TV's "Herman's Head," plays Captain Eisen, the seasoned commander of the space carrier *TCS Victory*, where our hero finds himself reassigned.

Wing Commander veterans will remember that the *Concordia*, Blair's previous ship, was destroyed by the Kilrathi at the end of Wing Commander II.

John Rhys-Davies, best known for his role as Sallah in the Indiana Jones trilogy, plays two roles in Wing III. As Thrakhath, the bloodthirsty Kilrathi prince, he attempts to wipe out the last remnants of the Terran battle fleet. As Paladin, Blair's best friend, he is head of covert operations for the Confederation—just the kinda guy Thrakhath would love to exterminate.

And, for the first time, Blair has not one, but a pair of love interests. Flint, played by accomplished stunt woman and TV film actress Jennifer MacDonald, is a hotshot pilot flying under Blair. She just happens to have a big crush on her boss. Former porn star Ginger Allen plays Rachel, the tomboyish technician on the *TCS Victory*. Rachel wouldn't mind getting to know Blair quite a bit better.

The cast supplies the acting. You, as the player, propel the action and interaction. When characters meet, you choose Blair's responses to their comments. Choose wisely, and you keep the *TCS Victory* in one piece. Make the wrong decisions, and your demoralized crew may just fall apart, leaving you to face the music in the Kilrathi disintegration chamber.

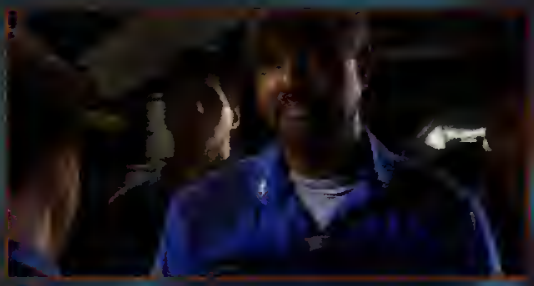
Wing Commander III is due out before the holidays. For a head start on getting to know the new characters and mastering the new challenges, join us for an exclusive guided tour.



TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KUBISKY © 1994



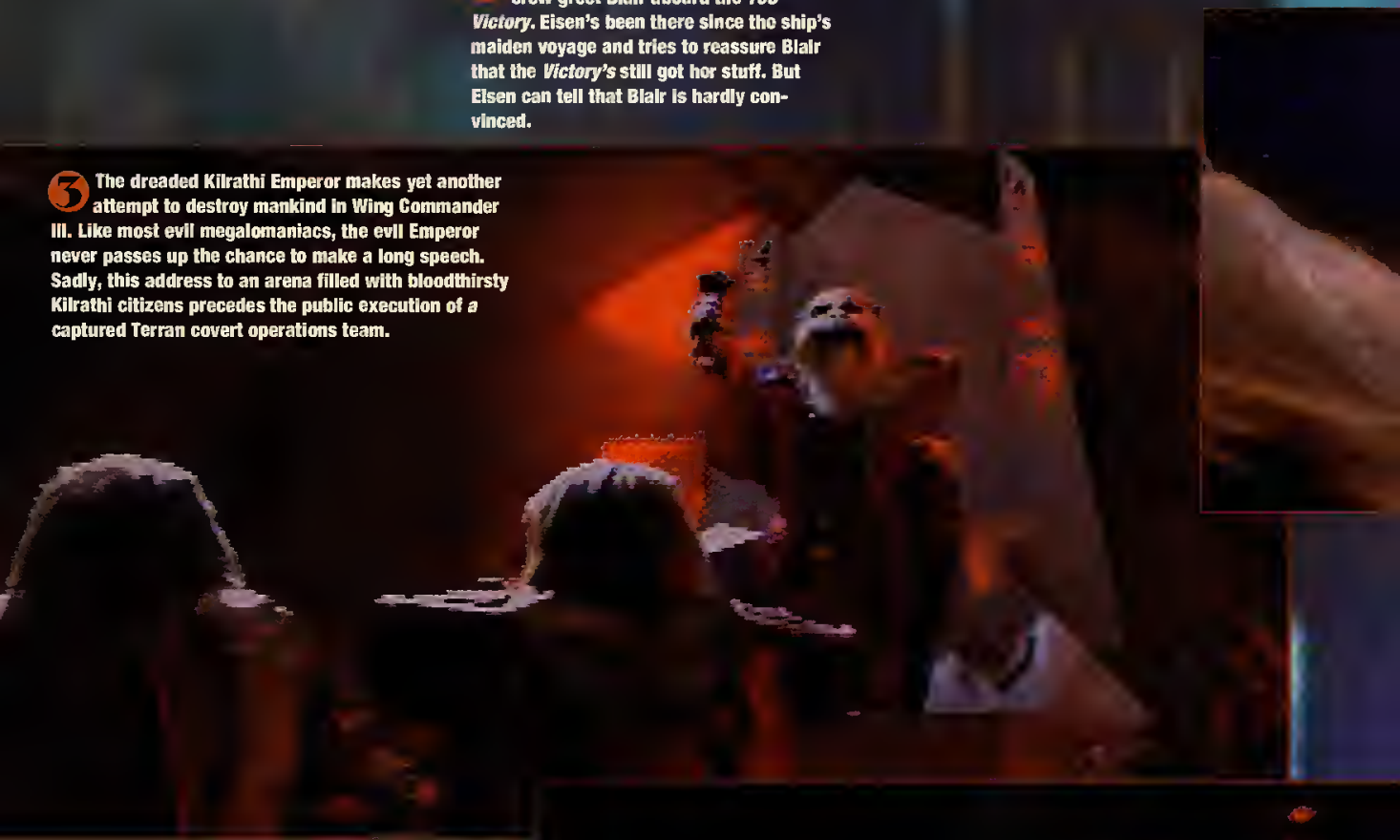
1 Blair is called into Admiral Tolwyn's office only to find that he has been transferred to one of the oldest space carriers in the Terran fleet, the *TCS Victory*. The new post is disappointing, considering that Blair had previously served on the *Tiger's Claw* and the *Concordia*, the Rolls-Royce of the Confederation. Of course, both those vessels were blown to bits by Kilrathi fire.



2 The seasoned Captain Eisen and his crew greet Blair aboard the *TCS Victory*. Eisen's been there since the ship's maiden voyage and tries to reassure Blair that the *Victory's* still got her stuff. But Eisen can tell that Blair is hardly convinced.



8 Maniac is a great pilot, but he loves to talk trash—even to his superiors. Blair might find it satisfying to put him in his place, but it could also cost the morale of one of the squad's best pilots. If Blair can't strike the right balance with those he meets—both subordinates and superiors—he'll end up in a Kilrathi disintegrator.



3 The dreaded Kilrathi Emperor makes yet another attempt to destroy mankind in Wing Commander III. Like most evil megalomaniacs, the evil Emperor never passes up the chance to make a long speech. Sadly, this address to an arena filled with bloodthirsty Kilrathi citizens precedes the public execution of a captured Terran covert operations team.



4 Things get pretty toasty when some captured Terran spies meet their maker in the Kilrathi disintegration chamber.



7 Blair can put some love in his life by sending the right vibes to Rachel or to Flint. However, getting romantically involved with either of them could cause more trouble than he can handle, since both women control critical elements of the mission. Broken hearts have a way of coming back to haunt you.





6 The brutish and maniacal Prince Thrakhath argues with the more moderate Melek. Unfortunately, there is no hope that negotiation can settle the war—the only conclusion can be total victory for one side and total annihilation for the other.



5 Paladin must balance his role as Blair's good friend with his job as head of covert operations. He must toe the Confederation party line while knowing full well that mankind may be losing the war.

Flying Time

If you liked how it felt to strap yourself into the previous Wing Commander incarnations, you'll love the feel surrounding yourself with Wing Commander III's luxurious interior.

Space jocks with enough hardware horsepower—a fast 486 or Pentium with a local-bus graphics card—can run Wing Commander III in optimal Super VGA mode. And as you can see from these screens, the results are amazing.

Polygon-based, texture-mapped ships have replaced the pixelated crafts of old. Capital ships look sharp even on close inspection. And instead of gauging your speed and direction by watching a few flakes of space dust go by, you navigate through entire clouds of flotsam and jetsam. The new graphics also make for smoother movement and a more realistic feel during combat—when that Kilrathi starts to break right, you see it happening and can react more effectively.



Wing Commander III's terrific graphics give the universe a whole new look.

Wing Commander III's artificial intelligence has also leapt light-years beyond previous versions, so you'd better stay on your toes. Your first opponents may make easy targets of themselves by repeating the same evasive maneuvers, but later aces rarely try the same thing twice. And don't expect enemy ships to simply turn around to gun you down as they did in previous games. These guys now attempt to lose you first.



The enemy ships look great in Super VGA—especially when they're sitting in your sights.

The improvements go even further. With a keen eye and fast fingers, you can blow off the movable gun turrets mounted on Capital ships. An intelligent external camera view keeps track of two ships simultaneously—your wingman and the target, say—making it easier to monitor how well your side is doing on the 3-D battlefield.

Wing Commander veterans will feel right at home with the controls, but they'll be thrilled to discover that everything else has changed for the better.

—Christopher Lindquist

Thanks to Frank Savage, project director at Origin, for his help with this story.

Online services are fast becoming the singles bars of the '90s



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN CONRAN

LOVE at first BYTE

Forget the pressure of swapping witty banter with intriguing party guests while keeping the cheese dip off your chin. Skip the bar scene. Stop hanging around the laundromat, and tear up your membership to that video dating club. If you really want to meet that special someone, fire up your modem.

By James Daly

Millions of people who are tired of enduring smoky juke joints or blind dates arranged by well-intentioned but obviously nearsighted friends are discovering the thrills of online romance. The electronic netherworld of cyberspace has become the most promising mating ground since freshman mixers: People who've never laid eyes on each other meet, chat, and—while running up connect-time bills that would spook Citibank—fall in love.

Just ask Deborah Harrison.

Last year, the 35-year-old psychotherapist was in an online chat room gabbing about nothing in particular when she struck up a conversation with Jeff Fox. "He made some literary references that I understood, and I found that funny and intriguing," she says. Further electronic chats led to mutual intrigue. The logistics weren't ideal—he lived in Michigan and she in South Carolina—but after swapping messages every day for four months, they finally met face to face. They soon moved in together, and next year they'll be married. "And there's just no way in the world we would have met otherwise," Harrison says.



A Better Way to Meet

Thousands of folks are taking advantage of this new approach to dating. They peer into glowing computer screens and talk to new friends they meet through such services as America Online and CompuServe. Computers offer a chance to meet people, share thoughts and goals, wind down after a hellish day at the office, or simply get to know someone from the inside out in a safe and controlled atmosphere. Even Rush Limbaugh, the bombastic radio talk show host who never seems to be at a loss for words, met his wife Marta after she initiated a conversation through CompuServe.

Many find the online world to be a sane, honest, and less stressful way to meet others. Some of the services report that as much as one-third of online time is spent simply chatting and leaving digital love notes. Veterans say there's something about swapping electronic messages that makes perfect strangers open up like tulips in the spring, moving quickly to intimate disclosure.

Why? For starters, the broad reach of commercial services and the Internet make it easy to find like-minded people online. Whether you're into moonlight walks on the beach or bondage masks in the boudoir, odds are good you'll find someone who's willing to talk about it—even at three in the morning.

Online chat areas also allow participants to be as open or aloof as they wish. You can meet others in a safe and private setting—your home—and don't even have to give them your real name. You may hook up with someone who invites you to "go private," which means moving out of the public chat room into a private conversation area for a more personal conversation. And if you don't like someone, it's easy to simply disappear back into the limitless folds of cyberspace.

For those who are more visually inclined, some chat areas include a gallery where you can upload electronic pictures of yourself and download pictures of other participants.

Digital Fantasies

Those who've tried it say the electronic world is a great place for romance because electronic communities are a fantasy anyway—and fantasy is at the heart of any great romance. Many couples, after all, have fallen in love by light too dim to choose a pair of shoes in. And exchanging love letters—even digital ones—has always been a quick route to some genuinely heady territory. "It's all one big fantasyland," says David, 38, an editor in Boston. "And that's what makes it so interesting."

Veteran online cruisers remind novices not to let their overheated fantasies spin out of control. "When you meet someone online, you fantasize that this is *the* person," says Sandy, a 36-year-old accountant from New York who has now spent eight months with a man she met online. "You make him or her out to be that person you've always dreamed about meeting."

But not every online flirtation ends in a flower-strewn trip down the aisle. The very anonymity of online communication makes it easy to pretend you're somebody you're not, and the electronic community is awash in tales of broken romances and deceit. Apocryphal stories of 26-year-old women turning out to be 58-year-old men abound, and the ImagiNation Network, for example, reports that 70 percent of its members have logged on as the opposite sex at least once. (For more about online travestism, see "Blonde Ambition" on page 50.)

For instance, Chloe, a student living in Coral Springs, Florida, recently fell hard for a special guy she met online. But there was trouble. "It turns out everything about his life was a lie," she says. "He had seemed to be the perfect guy, but it turned out that he had four girlfriends in his own town and several more around the country, including about four fiancées."

Even assuming your new paramour is being honest about him- or herself, "there's a lot of room for disappointment," says Sandy. There are plenty of people online who are interested only in playing games and have no intention of getting involved in anything serious.

You should always be careful about giving your real name or phone number to a stranger—even one you feel you've gotten to know very well online. What you feel when chatting over the wires can be very different from the reaction when you finally meet.

Nuance Lost

One downside of online romance is that electronic chatting lacks the tone of voice, eye contact, and the other things that psychologists say are essential to induce a moon-in-June swoon. So, onliners have developed a new language full of pictures made from punctuation. Virtual sweet nothings include the following:

:-)	Happiness
:-*	Kiss
:-x	My lips are sealed
;-)	Wink
{{{(xx)}}}	Hugs and kisses
:-(	Unhappiness
>:-(	Anger
88888:-o	I've just gotten a bad perm

You can also use asterisks to *emphasize* something, ..pause for effect by using an ellipsis..., and, of course, INDICATE SCREAMING BY TYPING IN ALL CAPS. *~James Daly*



Reality Check

If you decide to make the plunge and connect flesh and bone to bits and bytes, be prepared for a little adjustment. Making the switch from flirting in the mystical soup of cyberspace to conversation in the unforgiving glare of a coffee shop can be a tricky proposition.

As in any real-world relationship, honesty is vital. "Computer romances can work, but only if there is complete honesty and no game playing," says Karen Kay, a 41-year-old Ohio resident who met her husband online seven years ago.

To protect yourself, experts recommend caution when taking an online relationship into the real world. If possible, meet in a neutral, public place like a restaurant, where you can feel comfortable and try to get acquainted. Take it slow, and get to know each other offline as well as online before you make a serious commitment.

Even with care and caution, sometimes things just don't click. "I've met people who were very intriguing online, but when we met they were total duds," says Sandy. "Online they tended to be much more open. In person they closed up considerably."

Ann, a writer in San Francisco, had a month-long online friendship collapse after only four hours of face-to-face conversation. "The realism was too much for him," she says.

If things do go well face to face, come back online and talk, letting the relationship grow on familiar turf.

Even though Deborah Harrison is now getting married to her online paramour, they still exchange e-mail from their respective offices. "And it's still as romantic as it ever was," she sighs. "It's something that I never want to lose."

Holiday Gift Ideas For Your Online Sweetie

Have you met that special somaone on your computer? As the holidays race towards us, that important question "What to give?" resounds in all our cyber-ears. Here are a few suggestions on how to please your online love:

- Send a sexy GIF file of yourself to him/her.
- Post a special message to your love—in a public place.
- Send a dozen roses—electronically. Just type out 12 versions of: @—}—}—.
- Tell your sweetheart your password and let them use your online account for one free hour of chatting with you.
- Send a sexy WAV file with your own voice singing, "Happy holidays to you."
- Create a huge heart macro for him/her.
- Upload a lovely little original story.
- Give your heartthrob some interesting shareware.
- Jump right in and give him/her your telephone number for some direct voice contact.

—Deanna Warren

A Virtual Wedding

They didn't maet in cyberspace, but that didn't prevent them from getting hitched there.

Monika Liston, 25, and Hugh Jo, 33, decided to forgo a sparkling summer afternoon in San Francisco last August and instead plunge into both an electronically created City of Atlantis and the history books as the first couple to wed in virtual space.

"We wanted to get married in a place where nobody could actually get married in real life," said Liston, who works at the CyberMind Virtual Reality Center, where the ceremony took place.



The couple donned clunky virtual reality headgear and took their vows in front of about 200 chuckling wedding guests, who kept their eyas fixad on three video monitors that displayed what the bride and groom saw.

The ceremony began as the bride was borne through an electronic landscape by a chariot and two white horses. The groom (clad literally and virtually in an outfit straight out of the "Captain Video: Space Cadet" series) joined her as they entered the fantasy city and ascended the palace steps.

From there they were supposed to proceed up to an altar where vows were to be exchanged. Instead, the program froze while they were stuck in a hallway. You've got to be ready for bugs in virtual space, so the ceremony was performed on the spot.



Soma fundamentals did apply, though. Because of pasky legalities, the bride and groom had to ramove their headgear in order for a priest to pronounce tha couple offi-cially marriad in nonvirtual spaca.

—James Daly

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HOLIDAY SOFTWARE SPECTACULAR



EDITED BY ANN M. MARCUS

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT'S EXCLUSIVE GUIDE TO THE BEST MULTIMEDIA TITLES, COMPUTER GAMES, AND EDUTAINMENT. YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

For the perfect holiday gift, you can't do better than entertainment software. But shopping for entertainment programs can be confusing. How do you pick the right package from the incredibly varied selection of games and multimedia titles on the shelves?

We can help. During the past year, the staff of *Electronic Entertainment* has evaluated hundreds of games, multimedia titles, and online services. We've come up with 78 gift selections that are sure to please. And to make it easy to find just the right present, we've separated our choices into 10 categories.

You're sure to find something to thrill anyone—whether you're looking for games for PC or Mac owners or diversions for CD-ROM-based gaming systems. Sports fans will love the terrific new games, and curious types will find that the latest multimedia reference programs are both engaging and informative. You can also give the gift of computerized music, art, and magazines—or invite your loved ones to join you online in cyberspace. Colorful screen savers and other wacky add-ons will amuse and amaze. Of course, kids love computers, too, so we've also included a bevy of games and edutainment titles that will appeal to the younger set. Prices begin at less than $20, so even Scrooges can be generous.

And remember, just because you're gift shopping doesn't mean you can't buy yourself a present, too.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUKBAN

READY, SET, PLAY PC GAMES

THE PC HAS BECOME THE HOTTEST GAME PLATFORM AROUND, WITH HUNDREDS OF NEW RELEASES THIS SEASON.

TIE Fighter *Star Wars* fans who love shoot-'em-ups will find this sequel to X-Wing right on target. This time, gamers go to battle on behalf of the Evil Empire. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS, $63.95). Looking for more plot in a space shooter? Check out **Star Crusader**. (GameTek, 800-426-3835; DOS, $59.99; DOS CD, $69.99)



TIE Fighter exploits the dark side of the Force.

Realms of Arkania–Star Trail In this superb sequel to Blade of Destiny, players must first survive in and then save a dangerous world in which nobody can be trusted. (Sir-Tech Software; 800-447-1230; DOS, $69.95; DOS CD, $79.95)



Star Trail: Do you know who your friends are?

Bring a little fantasy into your PC reality with **Inherit the Earth,** a role-playing game that features beautiful graphics and puzzles that aren't too brain-bending. (New World Computing; 800-325-8898; DOS/DOS CD, $35.95)

Doom II: Hell on Earth This holiday season, the demons of Hell are waiting on earth. Everybody loves Doom, and now the action gets even hotter. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS/DOS CD, approximately $50)

Imperial stormtroopers are on the first-person shoot-'em-up menu in **Dark Forces,** a Doomlike game set in the *Star Wars* universe. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, approximately $60)



Be prepared for the wrath of Dark Forces.

Battle Bugs will tickle the funny bone of war-sim fans. In this light-hearted combat game, players command an army of ants and other insects in a battle for dominance of the kitchen leftovers. (Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS, $44.95)

Alien Legacy A game of space exploration and colonization, Alien Legacy combines military and diplomatic skills in the quest for control of the Galaxy. (Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS, $49.95; DOS CD, $69.95)



Control the galaxy in Alien Legacy.

Millennium Auction Players bid for priceless objet d'arte, competing against some of the richest and strangest collectors on the planet. (Eidolon; 718-884-7095; Win CD, $69.95)

F-14 Fleet Defender A realistic and sophisticated flight sim that lets top guns fly high in America's most advanced jets. (MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS/DOS CD, $59.95)

BreakThru! Tetris addicts will love this new action/puzzle game. This time around, the goal is to raze the Berlin Wall. (Spectrum Holobyte; 800-695-4263; Windows/Mac, approximately $50)



BreakThru! and reunite East and West Germany (again!).

Way Cool Games for Windows A collection of simple yet engrossing puzzle and word games—at a price that makes you an instant winner. (Quantum Axcess; 800-867-4890; Win CD, $19.95)

Microsoft Space Simulator Forget mere airplanes. Space Sim lets armchair astronauts try their luck at piloting a lunar landing craft and other interplanetary ships. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, $49.95)

MAKE MINE MAC

TRADITIONALLY, MAC GAMERS HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT IN THE COLD. BUT THIS YEAR THEY CAN CELEBRATE A TERRIFIC COLLECTION.

SimCity 2000 The updated version of the classic adds new features and better graphics. Even newcomers to computer games will enjoy this challenge. (Maxis;



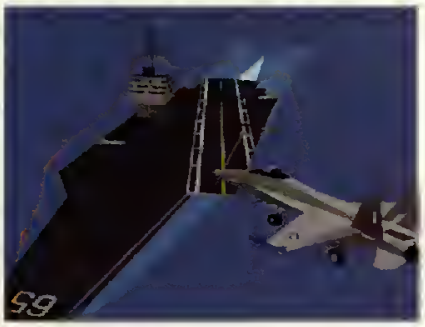
The survival of SimCity 2000 rests on your decisions.

800-336-2947; Mac/Windows, $54.95)

Gadget Visit starkly designed train stations and hotels, collect clues from mysterious strangers, and solve a daunting mystery in this Japanese-created twist on film noir. (Synergy; 800-427-6100; Mac CD/Win CD, $59.99)

Astro Chase 3D Arcade game fans will get a blast out of this space-based phaser-fest. It's easy to learn, but hard to master as you climb into an Ultraship and try to vaporize Mega Mines that are attacking earth. (MacPlay; 800-969-9263; Mac, approximately $40)

Wrath of the Gods Travel back to a toga party in Ancient Greece, confront the heavyweights of Greek mythology, and use your knowledge to solve crafty puzzles. (Luminaria; 800-336-2947; Mac/Win CD, $59.95)



FA-18 Hornet makes some mean manuevers.

FA-18 Hornet Jet aficionados will soar with this modern flight-sim. It flies high with realistic instruments and combat. (Graphic Simulations; 800-255-6227; Mac, $49)

NEW PLATFORMS, GREAT GAMES

WHO SAYS YOU NEED A COMPUTER TO HAVE CD-ROM FUN? 3DO, CD-I, AND SEGA CD DELIVER TERRIFIC ACTION DIRECT TO THE TV SET.

Litil Divil An interactive cartoon combining puzzle adventure with arcade action, this game has plenty of personality. It uses Philips' Digital Video Cartridge for movie-like realism. (Philips Interactive Media; 800-824-2567; CD-i/DOS/DOS CD, $49.98)



Sink your teeth into Jurassic Park.

Jurassic Park Stephen Spielberg's dinosaur flick was a monster at the box office, but most of the game adaptations have been duds. The Sega CD version does it right, with animated action and stunning audio. (Sega of America; 800-872-7342; Sega CD, $59.99)

Mansion of the Hidden Souls In this Sega CD takeoff on The 7th Guest, you wander a spooky 3-D haunted house to save your sister. The plot is silly, but the graphics are great. (Sega of America; 800-872-7342; Sega CD, $59.99)



If you can't shoot straight, don't mess with Mad Dog.

Mad Dog McCree Mad Dog has made an appearance on just about every gaming platform under the sun. Thanks to Philips' Digital Video Cartridge add-on, though, the CD-i version comes closest to matching the original arcade experience. (Philips Interactive Media; 800-824-2567; CD-i, $59.98. American Laser Games; 800-863-0234; DOS CD/3DO/Sega CD, $59.95)

Shock Wave Fly and shoot to save the Earth from murderous aliens. This game takes full advantage of the 3DO's superb graphical capabilities. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $69.95)

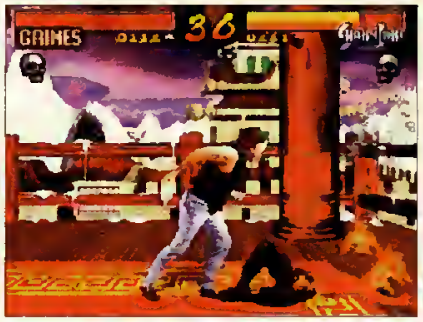
Road Rash This deadly motorcycle-racing game picks up speed as it moves from the Sega Genesis to the 3DO. Realistic graphics and music from top bands like Soundgarden make this one a winner. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $69.95)



Get great music and fast moves in Road Rash.

Tomcat Alley Put yourself in the gunner's seat of an F-14 as you fight off swarms of bogies. In this game, you don't just watch the video sequences, you play them. (Sega of America; 800-872-7342; Sega CD, $59.99)

Twisted: The Game Show Cross "Pee Wee's Playhouse" with a low-rent game show and you'll get some idea of the inspired craziness on tap here. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $59.95)



Embrace the Way of the Warrior.

Way of the Warrior The first fighting game for 3DO features 11 oversized characters and a whole battery of unique killing moves.

Continued on page 83



GAMETEK CINEMA PRESENTS SIX CULT CLASSIC MOVIES. METROPOLIS, ROBOTECH, R.G. VEDA, REEFER MADNESS, TROMA'S TOXIC AVENGER AND CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH IN DIGITAL VIDEO PRODUCED FOR YOUR MAC AND MPC CD-ROM FOR HOURS OF ENTERTAINMENT. ALSO FEATURING THE INTERACTIVE CULT MOVIE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD WITH POINT AND CLICK SURPRISES INCLUDING POPCORN, DRINKS, COMING ATTRACTIONS AND PLAYABLE ARCADE GAMES. NOW PLAYING AT COMPUTER STORES EVERYWHERE.

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gametek cinema
DIGITAL MOVIES

The scenery is spectacular, too. (Universal Interactive; 818-777-54000; 3DO, approximately $60)

Voyeur Robert Culp and Grace Zabriskie lend style and talent to this interactive political thriller. In a twist on Hitchcock's classic *Rear Window*, players try to expose the back-room double-dealing of a corrupt presidential candidate. (Philips Interactive Media; 800-824-2567; CD-i, $49.98)

GOOD SPORTS

FANS OF FOOTBALL, SOCCER, TENNIS, GOLF, AND BOXING—AND EVEN STRIKE-CRAZED BASEBALL HOLDOUTS—WILL FIND PLENTY OF THEIR FAVORITES IN THE LATEST CROP OF SPORTS GAMES.



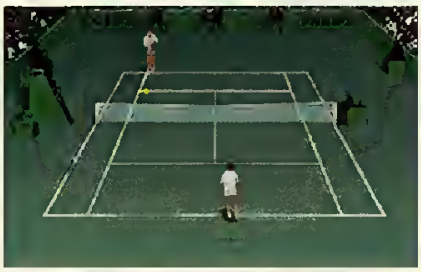
Get in on the action with John Madden Football.

John Madden Football Just about the most fun you can have without wearing shoulder pads. The 3DO version of this cartridge favorite looks great and plays even better. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $59.95)

Live Action Football This one's for fans of NFL Films. Wannabe coaches pick the plays for the NFL's best, then watch the game unfold via full-motion-video clips. (Accolade; 800-245-7744; DOS/Mac/DOS CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

Front Page Sports: Football Pro Real NFL pros punt, pass, and catch—not to mention slide, flip, and spike in this easy-to-play game that's as suitable for beginners as as it is for football-sim fanatics. Let the computer do most of the grunt work for you or get down to business and diagram plays, substitute players, and run the pigskin. (Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS, $34.95)

FIFA International Soccer The biggest kick around. This versatile soccer game runs in either arcade or simulation mode, so players can hack each other to bits or have a referee hand out penalty cards. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS/3DO, $59.95)



Net a hot love match in International Tennis Open.

International Tennis Open Digitized players mix overhand smashes, offensive lobs, and blistering backhands in this well-made tennis game from Infogrames. Originally a one-player CD-i game, the two-player version is available for multiple platforms. (Philips Interactive Media; 800-824-2567; DOS/DOS CD/CD-i, $49.98)



Links Pro looks—and plays—great.

Links Pro Simply the best-looking golf game around. Photographic courses and players, authentic sound effects, an easy-to-use hitting interface, putting grids, and realistic play keep it atop the leader board. (Access; 800-800-4880; DOS/Mac, $69.95)

PGA Tour Golf (486) For gamers who care about the players as well as the courses, PGA Tour Golf (486) pits electronic golfers against real pros like Tom Kite, Lee Jansen, and Fred Couples. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-2545; DOS CD, $69.95)

Prize Fighter A black-and-white *Raging Bull* look gives this all-video boxing game an air of brutal realism. It's fun, too. (Sega of America; 800-872-7342; Sega CD, $59.99)

Hardball IV Al Michaels provides the play-by-play in the latest version of this popular baseball series. You'll get the '94 stats and some of the best hitting and fielding action around, plus great graphics. (Accolade; 800-245-7744; DOS, $59.95)



Batter up in Hardball IV.

LOOK AND LEARN

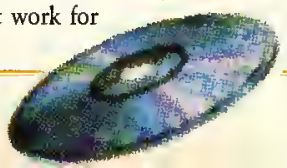
EDUTAINMENT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS. WITH THESE SLICK MULTIMEDIA PROGRAMS, EVEN ADULTS CAN HAVE A GREAT TIME LEARNING ABOUT MOVIES, WORLD RECORDS, AND EVEN "HERSTORY."

Microsoft Cinemania '95 A film buff's dream. Photos, video clips and reviews of 20,000 movies—including ratings, running time, and awards. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

The 1994 Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records A literary staple with multimedia sparkle. It includes the book's complete text as well as 50 videos, 850 photos, and 200 new record categories. Plus you get the paperback, too. (Grolier Electronic Publishing; 800-285-4534; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

Her Heritage Not just another interactive

Continued on page 85









You'll either end up a HERO or a barbecued CHICKEN!



Fire. Fighter.



COMING IN JANUARY!

Introducing MIDNIGHT RAIDERS and FAHRENHEIT, two sizzling new TruVideo thrillers from Sega CD.

In MIDNIGHT RAIDERS, you're on a do-or-die mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist. You'll have to decide who is friend or foe if you want to make it out alive!

In FAHRENHEIT, the first game about fire fighters, you'll battle intense heat and flames to rescue innocent victims.

Think you can take the heat? Then let Midnight Raiders and Fahrenheit take you straight into the line of fire!

This official seal is your assurance that this product meets the highest quality standards of SEGA™. Buy games and accessories with this seal to be sure that they are compatible with the SEGA CD™ System. Sega, Sega CD, The Sega Seal of Quality, Midnight Raiders, and Fahrenheit are trademarks of SEGA. © 1994 SEGA. All Rights Reserved.

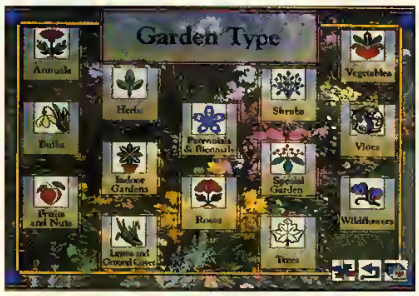
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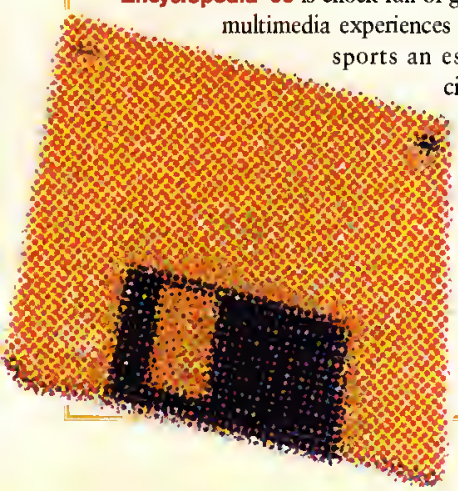
encyclopedia, Her Heritage highlights more than 1,000 famous American women through biographies, photographs, sound bites, and short film clips. (Pilgrim New Media; 617-491-7660; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

Better Homes and Gardens Complete Guide to Gardening This disc could inspire even the most avid gardener to put down the trowel and sit a spell at the computer. There's plenty to learn and the interface makes it easy to "dig" right in. (Multicom Publishing; 800-850-7272; Win/Mac CD, $59.95)



Gardeners will dig the Better Homes and Gardens disc.

Multimedia encyclopedias bring knowledge to life. The one you choose will depend on what you need. The new **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia** is well-suited to curious kids aged 8 to 80. The Edit Room feature lets you mix the encyclopedia's content with your own voice and text to produce a multimedia presentation. (Compton's NewMedia; 800-862-2206; Win CD/Mac CD, $149.95) **The New Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia** is great for older students and adults. This comprehensive information compendium houses more than 33,000 in-depth articles. (Grolier Electronic Publishing; 800-356-5590; Win CD/Mac CD, $149.95) **Microsoft Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia '95** is chock-full of great multimedia experiences and sports an especially easy-to-use interface. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $99.95)





Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia is one of the new crop of reference titles that makes learning fast, friendly, and fun.



DON'T JUST READ ABOUT ART AND MUSIC, EXPERIENCE IT. CD-ROM MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY ADDS THE ABILITY TO SEE AND HEAR EXACTLY WHAT THE FUSS IS ALL ABOUT.

All Music Guide Music lovers will appreciate this comprehensive guide to major artists in dozens of musical genres. From crunching rock to acid jazz, this database of capsule reviews and comments covers 34,000 recordings by 6,000 artists. (Great Bear Technology, 800-795-4325, Windows/Mac, $49.95)

☥ Interactive Tour mysterious hallways, secret rooms, and elevators that lead to a wonderfully realized synthesis of cutting-edge



☥ makes a spectacle of himself in this lush, self-indulgent CD-ROM extravaganza.

computer graphics and an ambitious career retrospective. Fans will love it. (Graphix Zone; 800-828-3838; Win /Mac CD, $59.95)

The Smithsonian Presents the Downhome Blues/Uptown Blues Trace the history of America's most original music from its birth in the southern deltas to its full flowering in the urban north. The two-disc set is packed with great music, videos, photos, interviews, and animations. (Philips Interactive Media; 800-845-7301; CD-i, $49.98)

C.P.U. Bach A fascinating introduction to the world of baroque music. Compose your own "Bach-like" musical creations using piano, harpsichord, violin, and string ensembles, or watch 3-D renderings of the instruments and the musicians. (MicroProse Software; 800-879-7529; 3DO, $79.95)

World Beat Take a musical tour around the globe through this text and aural exploration of more than 165 musical styles from more than 80 countries. Full-motion video clips demonstrate styles ranging from Afro Pop to Zydeco. (Medio; 800-788-3866; Win CD, $59.95)

Multimedia Songbook Turn your computer keyboard into a musical instrument. There's also an instrument gallery and a customization feature for changing the tempo and volume of the 250 songs included on the disc. (Midisoft; 800-776-6434; Win CD, $39.95)

I Photograph to Remember Photographer Pedro Meyer pays homage to his



Pedro Meyer remembers his parents beautifully.

elderly parents through his exquisite black-and-white images. I Photograph to Remember uses multimedia to present a personalized and moving connection with the artist and his family. (Voyager; 800-446-2001; Win CD/Mac CD, $39.95)

Continued on page 87

Troy's missing a few pages from his playbook.



They're in here — Troy Aikman NFL Football on CD-ROM

Like Page 7, Troy's "Pitch", the play that turned the Bills into four-time losers. And Page 21, Troy's favorite—"Lookie", the one that's made a lot of NFL cornerbacks consider a career change.

New Troy Aikman NFL™ Football™ on CD-ROM sets a whole new standard for video football games. It's the only game with Troy's own favorite plays -- straight from the Cowboys' playbook. Plays that helped win the last two Super Bowls. Plus each and every NFL player -- names, jersey numbers and stats. And the new two-point conversion. No other pro game has it. Not to mention Troy's *Team Setup*, a general manager's screen that lets you use your team's budget to build the kind of team you've always wanted.

Troy Aikman NFL Football gives you everything you need to build a winning team. Especially Troy's exclusive straight-from-the-Super Bowl-champion-Cowboys'-playbook plays.



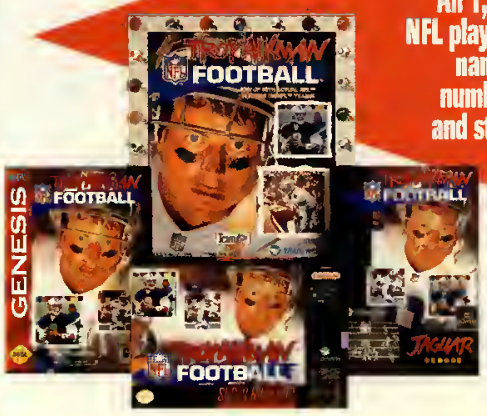
You don't just get any offense, you get Troy's offense, with Troy's favorite plays. Now you're headed for the Super Bowl!



Only Troy's game lets you control your team's budget. Beef-up your offensive line, secondary or any other position—just like the pros!

New on CD-ROM.

All 1,484 NFL players, names, numbers and stats.



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Xplora 1 Peter Gabriel's Secret World is a multicultural, multimedia musical experience. It features hot tunes from "US", as well as behind-the-scenes forays at WOMAD festivals and Grammy Awards rehearsals. (MacPlay; 800-462-2752, Mac CD, $59.95)

MULTIMEDIA MAGAZINES

PAPER-BASED MAGAZINES ARE GREAT, BUT THEY'RE NOW BEING JOINED BY ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS ON CD-ROM.

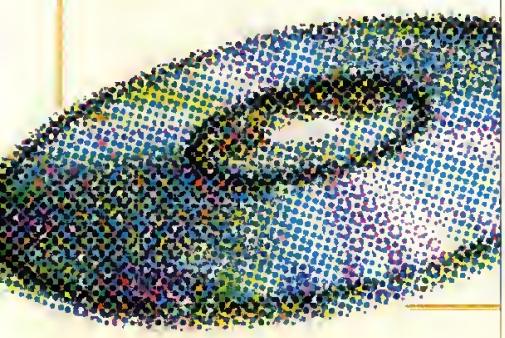
just think This quarterly CD-ROM publication adds graphics, sound, and video clips to cutting-edge text. Look for articles



***just think*, a paperless magazine.**

highlighting art, theater, music, film, politics, current issues, ideas, and people. (Ad•hoc Interactive; 800-928-4465; Win/Mac CD; $19.95/issue, $39.95 for 4-issue subscription)

substance.digizine For readers with a more musical and technological bent, *substance.digizine* includes up-close coverage of popular musicians like Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails, offers a software sampler, and provides access to the ImagiNation Network. (Substance Interactive Media; 800-346-4080; Win CD; $29.95/issue, $79.95 for 4-issue subscription)



ONLINE OFFERINGS

AN ACCOUNT WITH A POPULAR ONLINE SERVICE IS A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING.

Internet In A Box Your pilot and personal translator for journeying to the strange new world of the Internet. The easy-to-use interface takes the frustration out of navigating the 'Net by using recognizable icons and commands. (Spry; 800-557-9614; Windows, $149)

America Online and **CompuServe** Both the larger CompuServe and the newer, faster-growing AOL offer plenty of entertainment options and resources with friendly interfaces for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh users. And both let you chat with millions of other subscribers—all from the comfort of your own desktop. (America Online; 800-827-6364; DOS/Windows/Mac; $9.95/month includes 5 free hours, then $3.50/hour. CompuServe; 800-848-8199; DOS/Windows/Mac; $8.95/month for basic service plus $4.80-9.60/hour for extended services)



America Online offers electronic give-and-take on a wide variety of topics.

!Hitchhiking on the Information Highway Born-to-be-wild types will like Hitchhiking on the Information Highway, which includes helpful reference materials, toll-free trial subscriptions and necessary software for America Online, GEnie, NETCOM, CompuServe, and

Continued on page 89

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SNL on CD-ROM. Consume mass quantities.



Live from GameTek, it's Saturday Night With 20 years of digital video highlights from the Church Lady to the Blues Brothers Throw in some of the world's greatest bands, put it together any way you want, and you've got serious customized comedy It's Saturday Night Live Even when it's Friday.

GAMETEK

Two disk CD-ROM set available for MAC and IBM MPC formats ©1994 Broadway Video, Inc Saturday Night Live under license from NBC Photo: Edie Baskin ©1994 GameTek, Inc. GameTek is a registered trademark of I.J.E. Inc. All rights reserved For more information, call 1-800-GAMETEK



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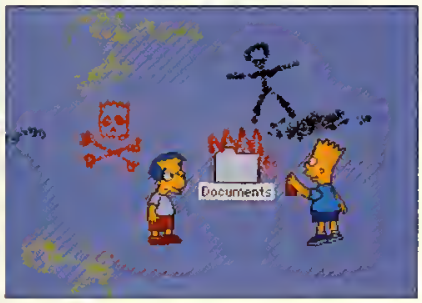
There are no upgrades from here.™

Prodigy. (Moon Valley Software; 800-473-5509; Win CD, approximately $60)

WINDOW DRESSING

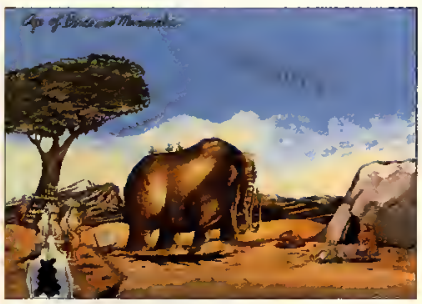
CLEVER SCREEN SAVERS AND AMUSING AUDIO CLIPS CAN HELP CUT STRESS AND MAKE THE PC MORE PERSONAL.

After Dark 3.0 The newest version of the program that made screen savers a household word has more than 30 new modules. (Berkeley Systems; 800-344-5547; Windows/Mac, approximately $29.99)



Save your screen, Man, with the Simpson's Screen Saver.

The Simpson's Screen Saver Cowabunga, Dude! This After Dark screen saver delivers 15 wacky modules featuring the hit TV show's animated characters. (Berkeley Systems; 800-344-5547; Windows/Mac, approximately $29.99)



Take a walk on the Far Side.

The Far Side Screen Saver Collection Larson loyalists are guaranteed a guffaw any time they need one. The collection includes 14 stylized modules featuring a plethora of Far Side 'toons. (Delrina; 800-268-6082; Windows/Mac, $39.95)

The Empire Strikes Back Talking Utility Now *Star Wars* fanatics can jazz up Windows with the voices of Luke, Han Solo, C-3PO, and the rest of the *Star Wars* gang. (Sound Source Interactive; 805-494-9996; Windows, $19.95)

Microsoft Scenes 2.0 Nature lovers will like the looks of Microsoft Scenes Sierra Club collection. These breathtaking outdoor photographs run as a screen-saver slide show or as Windows wallpaper. Microsoft offers five other collections in the series. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Windows, $24.95 each)

NO GROWNUPS ALLOWED

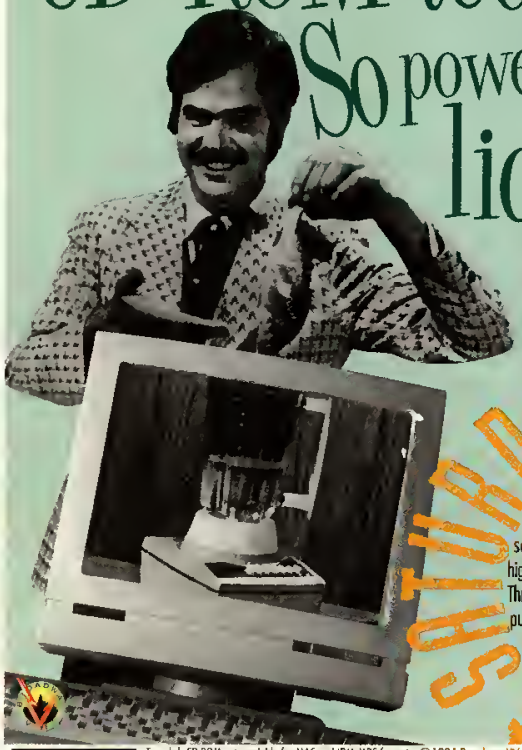
GIVE THE KIDS ON YOUR LIST MULTIMEDIA MERRYMENT THIS SEASON. NOT ONLY WILL THEY LOVE THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS, THEY'LL BE LEARNING UP A STORM—LONG AFTER THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER.

Kid Pix Studio Kid Pix is the granddaddy of computer-creativity programs, and this updated version takes young artists (ages 3 to 12) to new creative heights. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, approximately $45)

Continued on page 91

Advertisement

CD-ROM technology
So powerful it can
liquify a
Bass.



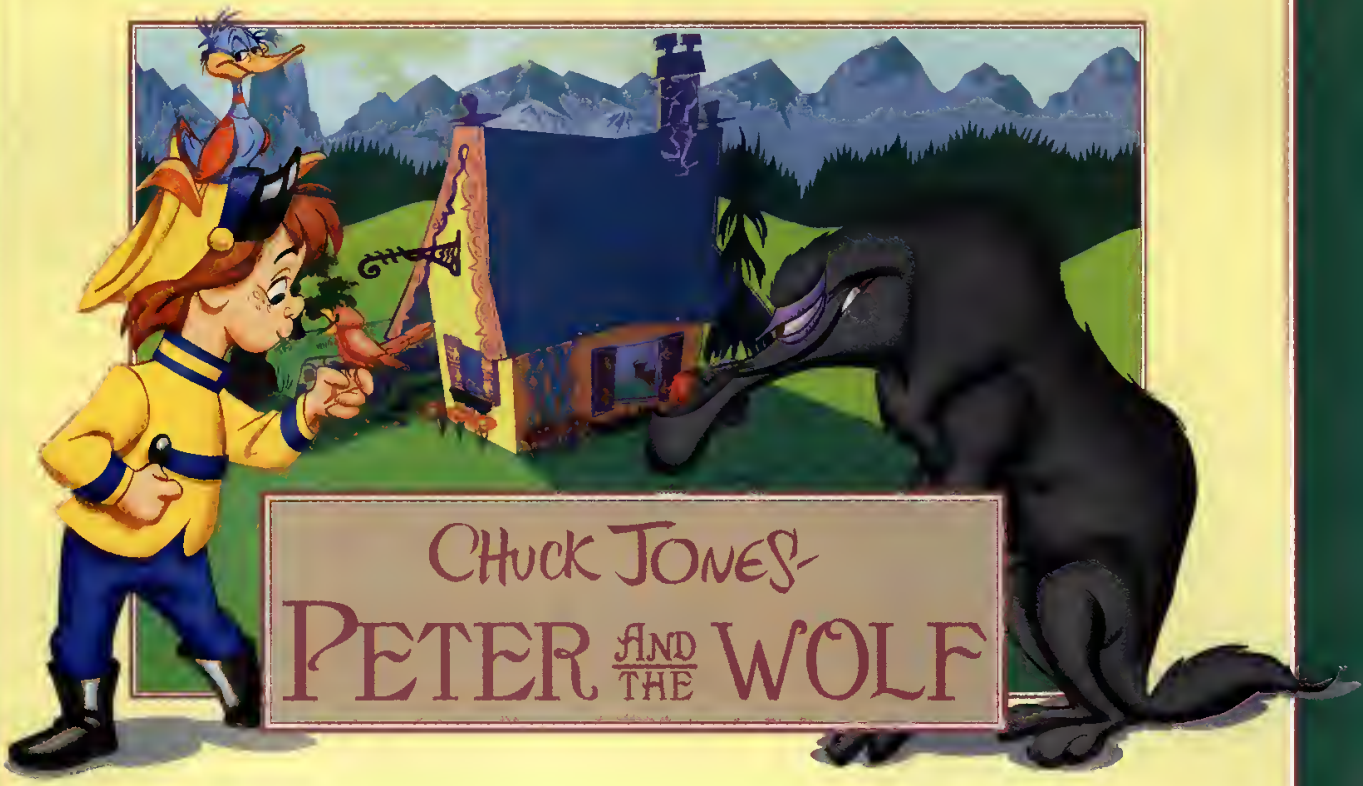
SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

CD-ROM technology meets the Bass-O-Matic, as Saturday Night Live hits the computer screen. With 20 years of digital video highlights from Wayne's World to Landshark. Throw in some of the world's greatest bands, put it together any way you want, and you've got serious customized comedy. It's Saturday Night Live. Even when it's Wednesday.

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THIS INTERACTIVE MUSIC ADVENTURE WILL HAVE YOUR CHILD WHISTLING A NEW 'TOON!





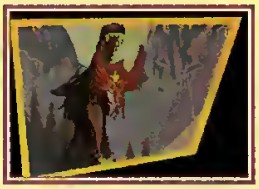
Kid-friendly and loaded with fun, the timeless tale of ***Peter and The Wolf*** is now available in a sensational new interactive version by animation legend Chuck Jones and conductor/director George Daugherty. Starring the voices of Kirstie Alley, Lloyd Bridges and Ross Malinger, this colorful interpretation of the beloved classic is fine-'tooned fun for kids of all ages. Children will delight in the gloriously animated tale...frolic with Peter and his friends in an exciting arcade-style game...and discover the wonders of music through hours of interactive play. This enchanting CD-ROM also comes with a **bonus audio CD** especially recorded for this production by the 65-member Time Warner Symphony Orchestra. A magical world of music and discovery is waiting. Visit your favorite software retailer, or call toll free (800-482-3766) today!



Eddie Baskin/Onyx



Marc Carter







Other ***Peter and The Wolf*** products available from Warner Books and TW Kids.

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CD-ROM

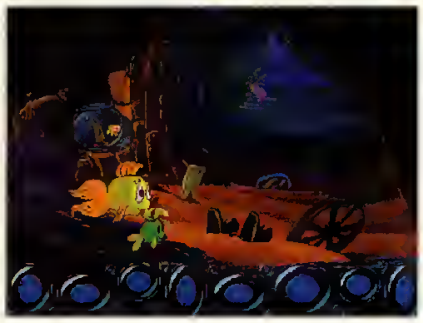
IF/X interactive

Crayola Amazing Art Adventure and **Crayola Art Studio** Crayola doesn't just mean crayons anymore. Amazing Art Adventure (for ages 3 to 6) has mazes, monsters, and connect the dots, while Art Studio (for ages 6 to 12) makes it easy for kids to design their own cars, clothes, and certificates. (Micrografx; 800-227-3283; Windows/Win CD, $59.95 each)



Young artists will like Crayola's programs.

Creative Writer A kooky-looking animated character named McZee plays guide to youngsters as they traverse Imaginopolis creating and illustrating original tales, getting story starters, or even producing their own newsletter. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Windows/Mac/Win CD, $49.95)



Kids help Freddi Fish find the missing kelp seeds.

Freddi Fish and the Case of the Missing Kelp Seeds Fans of Putt-Putt, the car-star of two hit electronic games, won't want to miss a chance to meet Freddi Fish, the heroine of the newest title in Humongous's Junior Adventure Series. Youngsters ages 3 to 8 will be enchanted by the beautiful graphics and high-quality animations of Freddi's underwater world. (Humongous Entertainment; 206-485-1212; Win CD, $49.95)

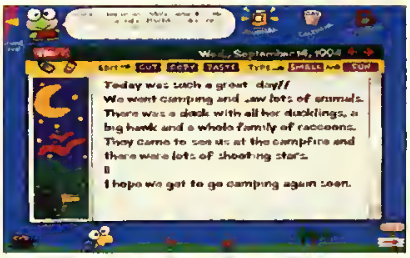
SimTown From the makers of the best-sellers SimCity and SimCity 2000. Precocious urban planners (ages 8 and up) can catch a glimpse of grownup responsibility as they try to create the perfect town. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac CD, $44.95)



SimTown lets budding urban planners show their stuff.

Where In The World Is Carmen Sandiego Junior Detective Edition This scaled-down version of the classic Carmen puts younger sleuths (ages 5 to 8) hot on the trail of the infamous criminal and her dastardly henchmen. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD, approximately $45)

Keroppi Day Hopper Keroppi is Hello Kitty's male frog counterpart. He shows up in a kids' computerized journal and calendar and offers writing ideas and trivia, a doodle pad, and a place to log important dates and events—like birthday parties. (Big Top Productions; 800-900-7522; Mac, $54.95)



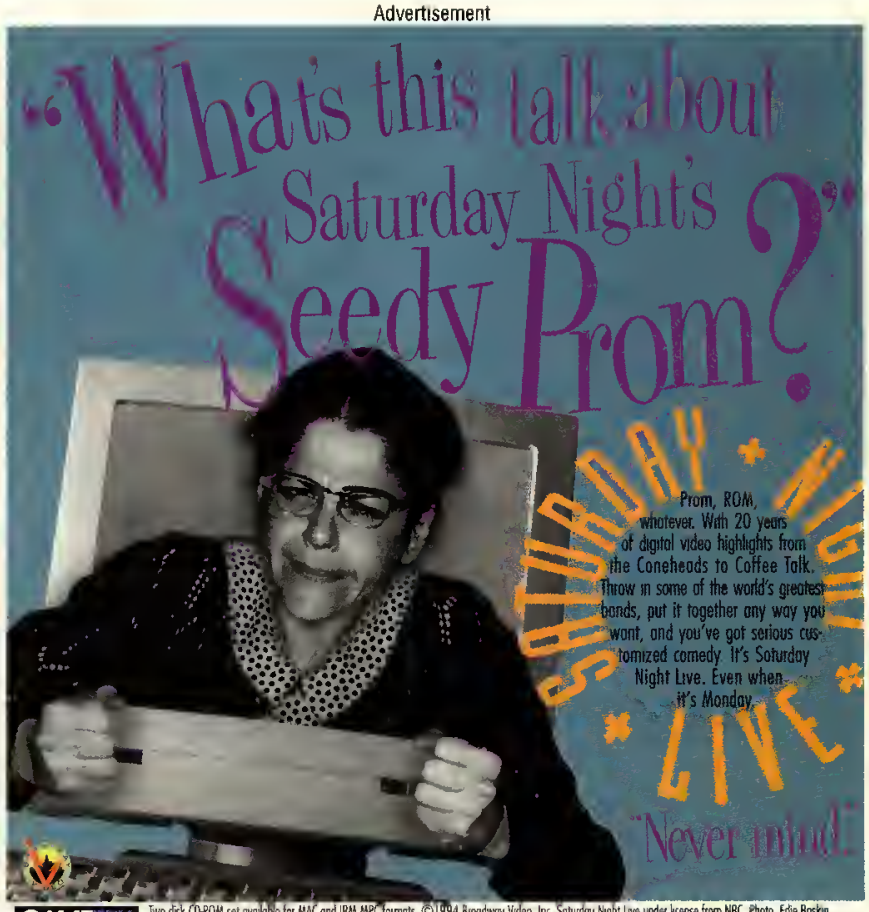
Kids can fill Keroppi in on their day.



Sammy's Science House Science comes to the preschool set in Sammy's Science House. Sammy the snake introduces kids to a weather machine, a workshop, a pond, and more. (Edmark; 800-691-2985; Windows/ DOS/ Mac, approximately $35)

Continued on page 92

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Ruff's Bone and **Harry and the Haunted House** Anyone with kids and computers knows about Living Books. For kids 3 to 8, Harry and the Haunted House invites young readers (and



Ruff and ready gets the Bone.

even prereaders) to explore the creepy house on the hill, while Ruff's Bone introduces kids to a wacky dog in search of an elusive bone. (Living Books; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, approximately $40)

Microsoft Dangerous Creatures Kids can go wild—literally—finding out what it's like to be a polar bear, a Portuguese man-of-war, or even a funnel-web spider. They explore the animals' habitats and natural defenses and can take a personal guided tour. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.99)



Preschoolers can visit The Crayon Factory.

Surf City and **The Crayon Factory** CD-i owners have always been graced with a wealth of kids' titles. Now, Surf City (for ages 7 and up) brings an animated adventure to a surfside town complete with classic surfin' hits by The Beach Boys and Jan & Dean. Younger kids will want to visit the Crayon Factory, an animated early learning game that's narrated by LambChop's mom, Shari Lewis. (Philips Family Entertainment; 800-824-2567; CD-i, $39.98 each)

Computer Crayon Kids' drawing programs are easier and more fun with this crayon-shaped mouse. (APT; 800-448-1184; PC/Mac, $49)

Flintstones, Nickelodeon, and Star Trek Computer Accesory Kits Spice up the family computer with one of these nifty accessory sets. Each set includes a special keyboard, mouse pad, monitor mask, and disk holder. And even grownup Trekkers will find the "Star Trek" set an enterprising gift. (BrainWorks; 800-999-9989; PC; Star Trek, $149.95; Flintstones and Nickelodeon, $129.95)

James Daly, Joel Enos, Christine Grech, Jeannine C. Harvey, Christopher Lindquist, Bill Meyer, and Fredric Paul contributed to this story.

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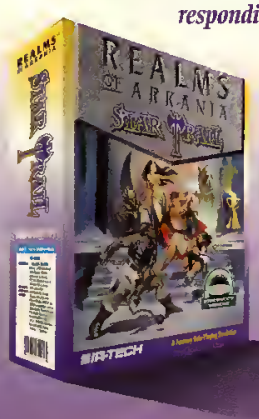
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– Strategy Plus, September 1994

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– Electronic Entertainment, September 1994



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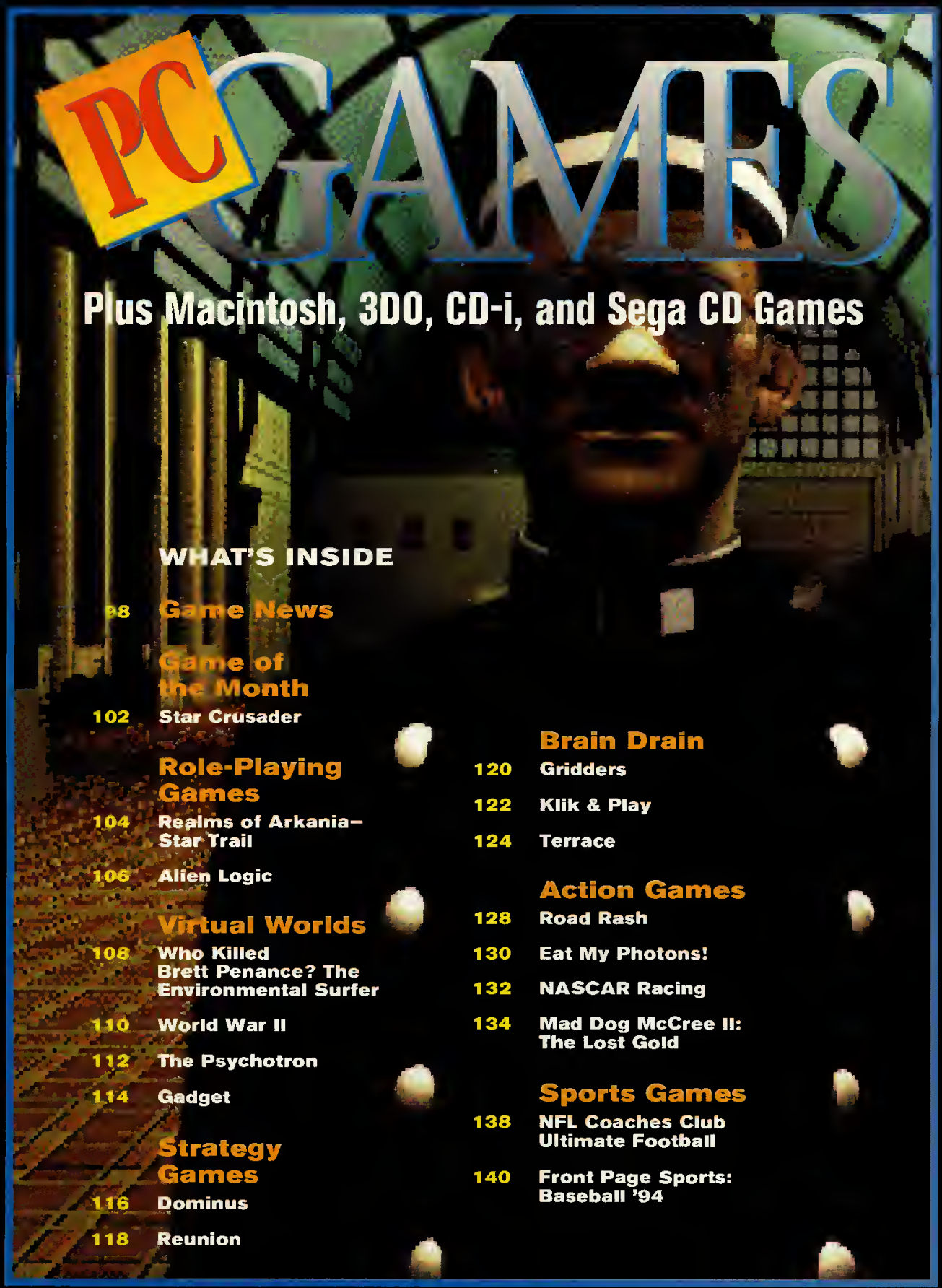
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Games of Import

Ever played **Genesia?** Are you sure? These days your favorite games might be imports in disguise—games that are developed and sold in the UK, France, or Germany, then translated, repackaged, and sent to the States.



"C'est la vie" in Winter Sports.

Both **Ultimate Domain,** originally titled Genesia, and **Winter Sports,** a.k.a. Super Ski III, were developed by Microides in France but are now published by The Software Toolworks for distribution in the United States. Toolworks isn't the only company looking overseas for titles: Electronic Arts imported **Theme Park, Populous,** and **Syndicate** from British developer BullFrog and is now publishing **Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure** from France's Delphine. Other solid foreign exchange games are **International Tennis Open,** developed by France's Infogrames and released in the States by Philips, and **Inferno,** from British developer Digital Image Design, now published by Ocean of America.

Bringing games over to the States—even ones with English text—isn't easy. Titles, packaging, and sometimes even content must be modified to address differences in language, culture, and law.

Translating game text and manuals and rerecording voice tracks is a serious enterprise, says Debbie Brajevich, director of marketing services at Virgin Interactive Entertainment. If the game doesn't translate well, the finished product can end up looking like a badly dubbed Godzilla film. Frank Gibeau, product marketing manager at Electronic Arts, points out that even British games have to be rewritten to address differences in sentence structure, humor, and colloquialism. After all, there's no "Hey, dudes!" in the Queen's English.

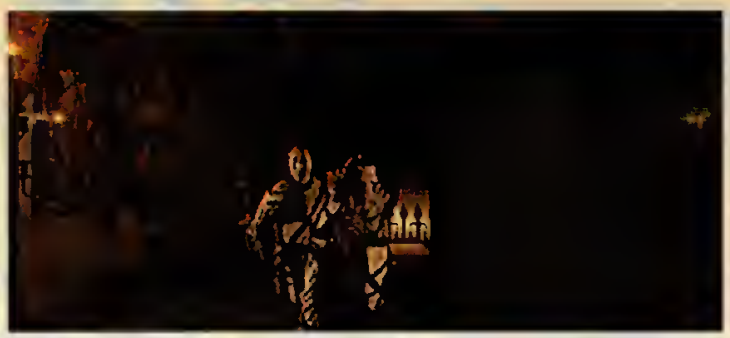
Games imported from Europe—especially Germany, where law prohibits explosions or weapons in box art—inevitably get package makeovers to add impact and to better suit American tastes.

Content compatibility is another big issue. "Some of the genres don't appeal to the European market. Obviously baseball doesn't do that well there," Brajevich explains. Vice versa, she noted that before

Continued on page 100

Scouting Report
Gaming News You Can Use

Buried in Time, the sequel to the Journeyman Project from Sanctuary Woods, hits the shelves early next year. In this one, you've been framed for altering the future, and now you've got to clear your name to avoid being thrown in the slammer. It's not all bad, though. Along the way, you'll take photo-realistic journeys to the Mayan Yucatan, Renaissance Italy, and Medieval France.



Buried in Time: a race to save your future self.

■

New World Computing has turned to live actors for one of its new games. **Multimedia Celebrity Poker** features Joe Piscopo, Morgan Fairchild, and Jonathan Frakes and promises slapstick banter and sex appeal, along with the usual poker simulation fare.

■

If you're looking for strategy, Titus Software has shipped **Virtua Chess.** This sim offers beautiful high-resolution graphics and real-time action, so you don't waste time waiting for the computer to make a move.

■

If you crave action of a more visceral sort, check out **U.S. Navy Fighters** from Electronic Arts, available this month. You'll find yourself aboard the aircraft carrier Eisenhower en-route to the Black Sea to protect the Ukraine from nationalist forces who have ousted Boris Yeltsin. Take 50 missions in texture-mapped F-14 Tomcats, F/A-18 Hornets, Russian SU-33 Flankers, and a proposed U.S. Navy version of the F-22 Lightning II.

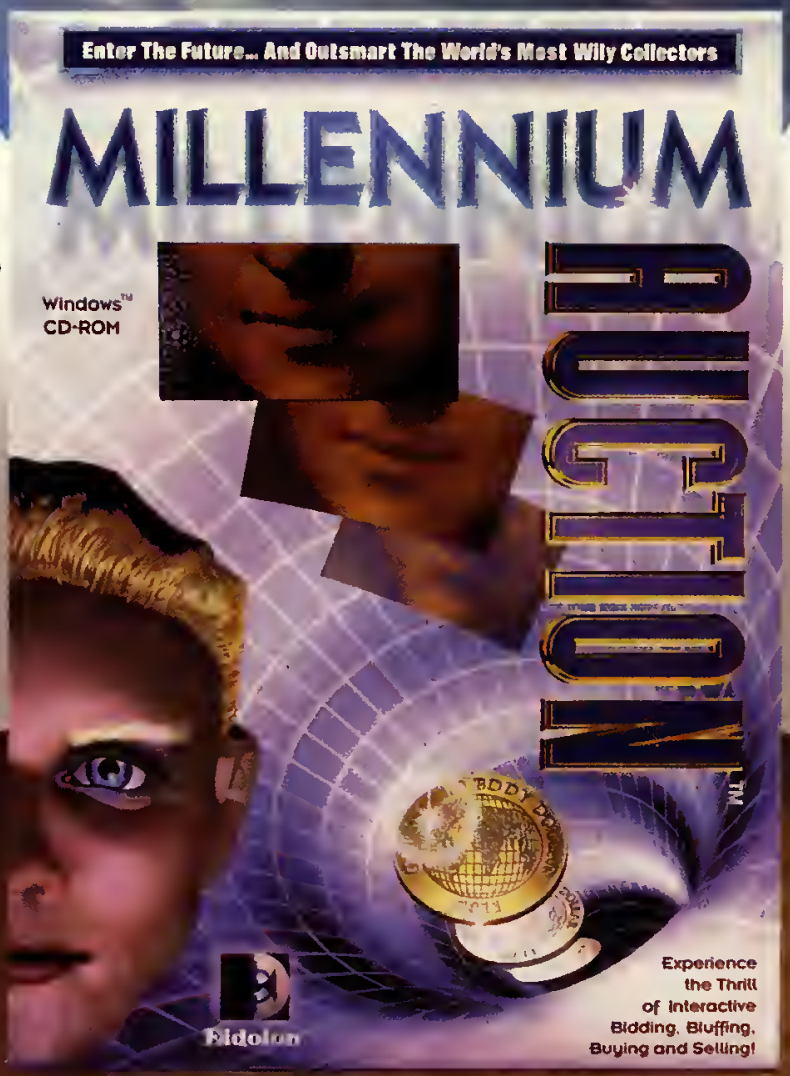
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the World Cup, soccer wasn't a big favorite in the States.

So, why go through all the work? It can be worth it. If a game is outstanding and has universal appeal, EA will deal with the hairy logistics and costs in order to bring it to the U.S. market.

There's a wealth of good developers overseas, too. Dave McElhatten, president of Philips Media Games, says he travels to Europe to look for new talent much like a record-company scout looking for hot bands.

And with the slew of game publishers turning to talent abroad, you're likely to become an international gamer whether you know it or not.

—Bill Meyer

Not-So-Dark Corridors

Here are some cheat codes for the Corridor 7 CD-ROM. Use them at your own risk.



Reload of the Gods

Press w, a, and x simultaneously to collect and reload all weapons, gather both keys, snap up 25 proximity mines, gain a map of all levels, and restore full health.

For the Daring Only

Start Corridor 7 by typing *corr7 level1diagnostic*, then pressing Enter. Begin a mission and hit the Tab, Left Shift, and Ctrl keys all at once. You have now entered the uncertain realm of "debug" mode. While it gives you access to a host of special features, it can also crash your system, so be warned!

Once you're in debug mode, the following commands are available:

Backspace-w Warp to any level.

Backspace-i Increases your score, supplies you with 200 rounds and 100 alien charges, and gives you the next weapon.

Backspace-g God mode: You're invulnerable!

Game Ratings Key

Games are rated from 1 to 5 in five categories. A rating of 1 means it couldn't be much worse, and a 5 means it doesn't get any better.

Game Play A high score says this game will keep you coming back for more.

Getting Started The game loses points if you'll spend more time reading manuals and learning commands than playing.

Graphics Image isn't everything, but hot graphics can make even mediocre games worth a second look.

Sound Check Stellar sound can make the difference between a good game and a great game.

Value The higher this rating, the better you can feel about getting out your wallet.



If you see our bug, you might notice them in the game, too.

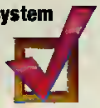
Look here for hints and tips to help you get started or keep you going in the tough spots.





Sometimes our reviewers find "undocumented" tricks that help tame killer titles.

This lists a game's minimum system requirements, including processor, memory, and video needs.



High technology comes to shooters and fighters in two video-based games from Digital Pictures, **Corpse Killer** and **Supreme Warrior**. Filmed like a horror movie, Corpse Killer casts you as a Navy Seal who must take out a renegade scientist who is making an army of the dead. Supreme Warrior is a fighting game that replaces cartoon characters and animated sprites with video. It doesn't leave out dozens of secret moves, multiple opponents, and myriad levels, though. Both should be available by the time you read this.



Get a little closer with Corpse Killer.

Another sequel down the road is **The Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall** from Bethesda Softworks. Its predecessor, The Elder Scrolls: Arena, was one of the top-rated role-playing games of '94. Daggerfall will up the ante in terms of graphics and feature some new technology when it debuts in February 1995.

Spectrum Holobyte is showing some sneak previews of products due for 1995, including the flight sims **Falcon 4.0** and **Top Gun**. Falcon 4.0, slated for late 1995, will reportedly continue Spectrum's tradition of high-end military flight simulation with improved graphics and smarter artificial intelligence. It will also have features designed to appeal to more casual users, including an easier to navigate interface and enhanced training sequences designed to gradually guide new pilots up the chain of command. Top Gun, scheduled for early 1995, will target entry-level to intermediate flight sim fans with a more action-oriented approach. Pilots will be audibly and visually pummeled with video of live actors, tons of dogfighting, and a rock 'n' roll soundtrack that should include songs from the *Top Gun* movie.

Simpler airborne experiences are to be found in **Glider Pro**, the sequel to Glider from Casady & Greene and one of the latest native Power Macintosh titles. Glider Pro lets you escape the eerie old mansion and glide your paper airplane over rooftops and meadows. Keep an eye out on the online services for new environments and landscapes created with Glider Pro's game editor. The original Glider 4.0 is also due out soon for Windows.

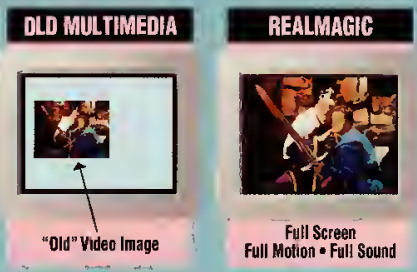


Multimedia? Right, I'm excited about video the **SIZE** of a postage stamp that moves like a mailman in a **COMA**.

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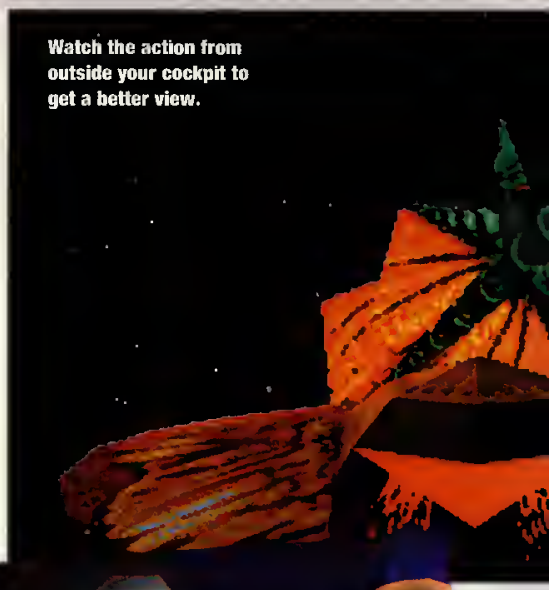
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Star Crusader

By Bill Meyer

If you're tired of games that don't have any real meaning but you still crave explosive action, Star Crusader from Gametek could fill the bill. This space adventure features furious battles, multiple characters with realistic personalities, a compelling plot, and great graphics that grab your attention and hold it.



Watch the action from outside your cockpit to get a better view.



Two Gorone commanders discuss the situation in the Ascalon Rift.



Using your ship monitors to pinpoint targets is critical.

You play Roman Alexandria, a top-gun space pilot who flies for the Gorene Empire—a merry group of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant conquerors. As Roman, you have been made Wing Leader of a squadron sent to a backwater galaxy called the Ascalon Rift. It's your job to give the restless natives an attitude adjustment so that your brethren can spread "peace and enlightenment"—the usual white-man's-burden stuff—throughout the universe.

The game is deep. You go on 14 missions before you get into the heart of the action. At that point you start picking your own copilots and crafts in a war against six alien races, each of which has a history, unique leaders, diverse racial characteristics, and a different arsenal of weapons. Staying alive requires knowledge of what ships, personnel, and tactics are most effective against each race. For example, one mission might require the fast and powerful Scorpion starfigher, while another might best be accomplished in a stealthy Intruder.

As the game progresses, it becomes pretty clear that the Gorene Empire's messianic vision of the universe isn't all that commendable. You aren't far into the game before the empire lets your commander get thrown in the slammer, and a warmongering madman takes over. Your new boss quickly demotes you and then orders a ruthless attack on a defenseless freighter that you promised would be kept free from harm. After all that, it's hard to sympathize with the Gorene cause. The alien rulers seem a lot more noble and intelligent in comparison. The leader of the freighter that gets destroyed actually compliments you after you give one of your particularly overwrought speeches about working for peace and harmony in the Rift.

The game starts coming to a head during mission





For best effect, match the two sights together and fire away.

42, when you must decide whether to continue fighting for the Gorene cause or turn traitor. Things are far from over, though—there are 50 more missions and sub-missions on both sides. The situation gets really interesting if you desert. Your former friends and comrades in the Gorene fleet don't like traitors, and you'll run into them again. This time they won't be covering your back—they'll be shooting at it. Fortunately, if they pop up on your view screen and call you a traitorous worm, you can heave back an insult. Your new copilots and leaders won't trust you totally at first, either. You'll have to blow away some of your former comrades before you gain the respect of your new ones.

The intimacy you develop with other characters helps create involvement in the larger story. Both enemies and friends remember you during missions (one particular female pilot with a crush on you is always close at hand to pull you out of hairy situations). On the other side of the coin, you also get to know the voices and faces of the most dreaded pilots in the galaxy—and they'll be gunning for you.

Pilot chatter on the radio and faces that appear on your ship's monitors heighten the realism. Passionate and uncensored bursts of character dialogue blend nicely with the onboard computer's emotionless asides, such as "Destruction is imminent." Sometimes all this audio/visual feedback gets a little confusing and tiresome, though. Occasionally a character's voice and face aren't properly matched—or maybe it's just that women in the Ascalon Rift have deep voices. Other times, you clear an area only to hear your pilots yelling as if they were still under attack. And one pilot's fondness for commenting that his ship cost 50,000 credits and still lacks a comfortable seat gets old pretty fast.

You keep an eye on your environment using three monitors that line the inside of your cockpit. The left and center screens keep track of what's on the battlefield as well as enemy and target location. The right monitor holds various radar screens and readouts for your vital inflight repair system. The ship's computer can fix damaged components automatically, or you can direct the repairs yourself. (If you're just trying to run for cover, those shields will be more useful than the tractor beam.)

Multiple flight views are available from inside and outside the cockpit. One of the best elements of the game is that you can view battles from outside the ship using either your own or your target's point of view. From an external vantage point, the colorful, imaginative crafts, searing explosions, and booming laser cannons make you feel like you're in the middle of an interstellar fireworks display.

Star Crusader combines spectacular space battle and great graphics with a slightly moralistic yet engaging story line. It's a must-have for any space-sim fanatic. (Gametek; 800-426-3835; DOS CD, $69.99; DOS, $59.99)



Some targets are easier to blow away than others.

GAME PLAY: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

GETTING STARTED: ⚡⚡

GRAPHICS: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

SOUND CHECK: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

VALUE: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

A great game in the tradition of X-Wing and Wing Commander.

☞ Follow your mission objectives and don't get cocky or trigger-happy if you want to be an Ace pilot. ☞ After the 14th mission, don't blow away freighters or space stations if they're not targets, or you'll grow old and gray breaking rocks on a prison moon. ☞ When trying to locate and lock in on your target, it's fastest to keep going up or down. You loop around and they come into view. ☞ Use your wingmen. Most of the time they cover you and keep you alive when you're outnumbered. ☞ Listen carefully to mission briefings—sometimes they hold valuable mission hints. ☞ Till you know the massive list of commands, P for pause is a game saver.

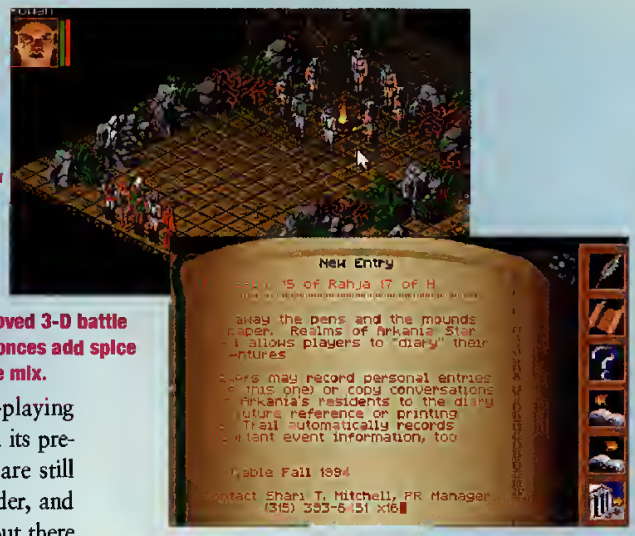
PSST!

386, 2MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, sound card, joystick

DOS

Realms of Arkania—Star Trail

By Barry Brenesal



Improved 3-D battle sequences add spice to the mix.

The new diary lets you add your own entries.



A beleaguered world awaits you.

Star Trail, the second release in the Realms of Arkania fantasy role-playing series, presents a more complex tale than its predecessor, Blade of Destiny. Sure, Orcs are still hanging around, and they're bigger, badder, and somehow better organized than before. But there are also deep rifts in the Dwarf/Elf/Human coalition, with distrust flaring up into lynchings, religious fanaticism, and race riots. Your party of six adventurers must try to bring the strife to an end so that a united front can be made against ever-stronger Orcs.

While the changes within the land of Arkania have been negative, the changes in the game of Arkania are nothing but positive. Take the automapping feature, for instance: Click on a store icon after invoking the overhead map, and you get the establishment's name. You can zoom in or out and attach comments to any building. The diary in the game is also an improvement on the one in Blade of Destiny. In addition to tracking your journeys, it keeps detailed notes about the characters who you meet and what the important ones tell you. You can add unlimited comments, too.

The graphics in Star Trail are also impressive. It has a few excellent animated sequences and a greater diversity of 256-color buildings to replace the earlier, washed-out 16-color ones. Arkania's lifeless streets, however, look and feel deserted compared with the lands in some of the competition, such as Xeen or Brittania. On the other hand, conversation is more extensive than in these other games. Simply approach any merchant or acquaintance and choose from a range of preset topics.

Time to hit the road? There's a lot of it to explore in Arkania, where cities are spaced a traveling distance of weeks apart rather than days. This trekking takes a major toll on shoe leather and health, particularly in the mountains. Along the way you find plenty of hidden roads and unexpected destinations, as well as lots of encounters, both friendly and distinctly otherwise.

Battles move you to a 3-D isometric field complete with obstructing walls and trees, where your team and their opponents move, attack, switch weapons, cast 80-plus spells, and run screaming into the night. The animation and color are great, and unlike Blade of Destiny, Star Trail lets you shoot or use magic along diagonal lines.

Hot keys, though, have yet to be invented in the Arkanian universe, and ease of use, while generally improved, remains a problem during battle. Still, when you put it all together—spectacular battles, a large world to explore, attractive graphics and sound, an intriguing nonlinear plot, character creation and advancement in 52 categories across seven major areas—you get a first-class fantasy role-playing game that should keep you busy for a long, long time. (Sir-Tech Software; 800-447-1230; DOS, $69.95; DOS CD, $79.95)

☞ Weak characters easily succumb to disease while traveling. Buy heavier sleeping bags and boots to replace your blankets and shoes when funds permit. ☞ Create a magician whose primary area of magical study is combat spells. Over time, he'll become a terror on the battlefield. ☞ You get decent experience points only for the first encounter with a new monster type—so seek out as many new monsters as you can. ☞ Very early in the game, there's an optional wilderness encounter that lets you attempt to rescue a priestess. Don't pass it up! The bonus is fantastic (and valuable). ☞ The Evil Eye spell not only removes an enemy from the battle but also converts the foe into a friend. Build your druid's prowess for this spell as soon as possible.

386, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA

GAME PLAY:	★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★★★

Improved graphics and game play make this a worthy sequel to Blade of Destiny.



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Alien Logic

By Barry Brenesal



Collect the Isho energy you need to survive combat on Jorune.

And now for something completely different: Strategic Simulations' Alien Logic creates a fantasy universe where you weave dyshas using Isho and create Recos by putting corks in incupods. Tour flying islands, locate cleeshtas, and explain to a Scarmis that you don't want to be wet down. If you're tired of elves and orcs, of predictable spells and magic swords, and of bad pseudo-middle English, you've come to the right place. Welcome to Jorune.



Jorune is a beautiful, but dangerous, place.

On Jorune, distant descendants of earth colonists compete for survival with intelligent native lifeforms and bioengineered earth species. You play a young man who narrowly escaped the massacre of his entire village several years ago. Initially seeking revenge, over time you must make allies among the clans and resolve a crisis of planetary proportions.

Alien Logic is a game of exploration and conversation. The world of Jorune holds the keys to mysterious powers and vital information in your quest. Abandoned artifacts can eliminate or enhance the abilities of those who unearth them. Bio-Tec robots can mine, heal, and even help humans breathe underwater. Confrontations with more than 160 representatives of 16 races offer the promise of support or battle to the death.

Fighting in Alien Logic is a matter of acquiring skills, or dyshas, from the Isho energy that permeates Jorune. You can potentially gain dozens of these dyshas through strange shanthic devices and encounters with kerning-bay masters in the Weaving World. It's a dangerous place, with monsters to destroy and fire pits to leap across—nothing out of the ordinary for a hero—but nothing too complex. This isn't intended to be an arcade adventure, after all.

Alien Logic's point-and-click interface is excellent. You can store as many as five dyshas under each function key, making it easy to summon what you need at any particular moment. For example, you might put a set of attacking and defensive dyshas under the F5 key. Each dysha comes with its own well-defined icon, so you're never at a loss for the proper response.

The game's Super VGA graphics look great. You'll wish, however, that there were more of them. The in-your-face culture shock of Jorune fades when you enter Burdoth, the largest human city, and find that it's a 2-D overhead drawing. Your icon moves over the terrain, as do icons representing other characters. This is a far cry from the 3-D, first-person perspective of other popular fantasy role-playing titles.

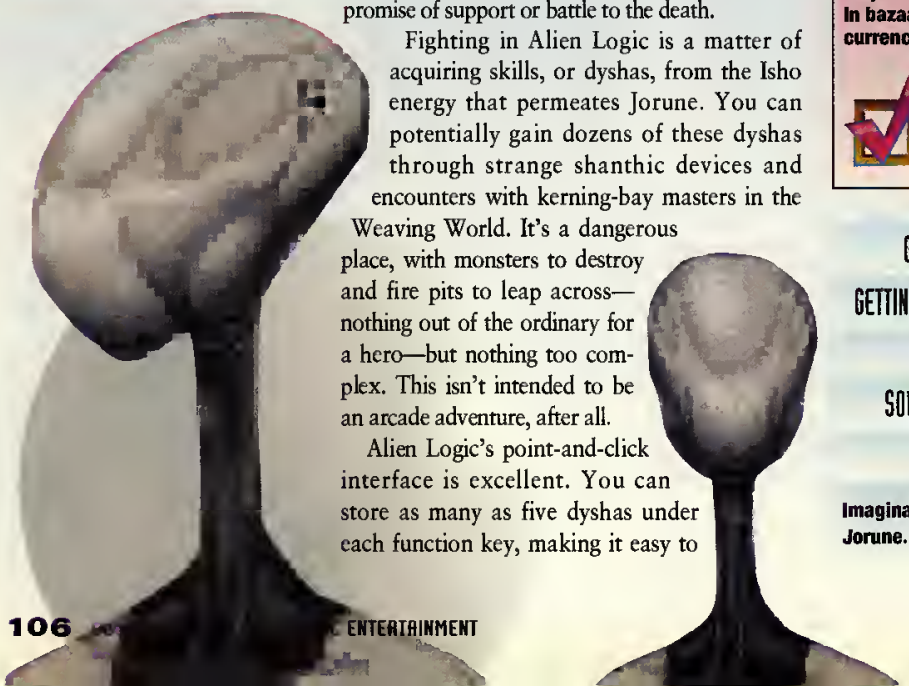
It's a shame that Alien Logic's developers drew back from that admittedly time-consuming step of creating 3-D graphics throughout the game, because it's the only area where imagination is lacking in an unusually clever, finely textured game. Buy a one-way ticket to Jorune: You'll never want to leave. (Strategic Simulations; 800-245-4525; DOS/DOS CD, $50)



☞ Return frequently to the thriddle leader, Salrough Gomo, for information updates. He's very helpful. ☞ Collect beagre pelts and trade them in bazaar shops for valuable gemlinks, Jorune's currency standard. ☞ Don't trust the crugar. Don't offend the corastin. Don't cut off a long-winded thriddle.

386, 4MB RAM, Super VGA, sound card, mouse

GAME PLAY:	4
GETTING STARTED:	3
GRAPHICS:	4
SOUND CHECK:	4
VALUE:	5

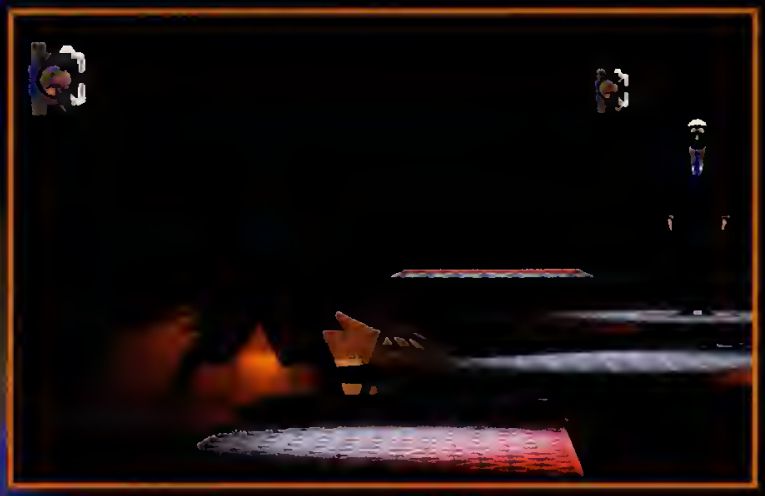


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WIN CD

Who Killed Brett Penance? The Environmental Surfer

By Joel C. Enos



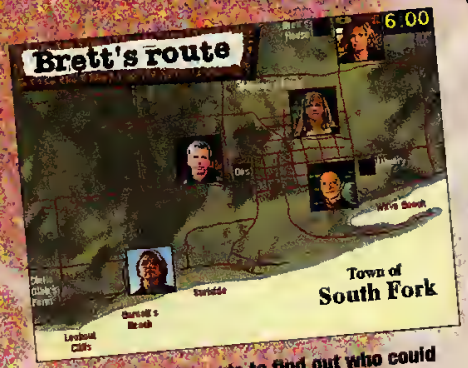
Brett's body lies dead on the beach. But who killed him?

Was the surfer poisoned by his rich, married lover? Or did Stella Gibbs, a trigger-happy old maid, decide that a rifle was the best way to settle their differences? After all, Brett Penance's environmental efforts could have cost her millions. As the investigator assigned to the case, you have to untangle the mystery quickly. Even though the dead man was found on the beach only this morning, you have just six hours to retrace his steps, check out the evidence, and clue into Who Killed Brett Penance? The Environmental Surfer, the third title in Creative Multimedia's Murder Mystery series.



Find out what the suspects claim they were doing on the Alibis screen.

Several sources of information are available to help. Begin by searching Brett's vehicle, his body, and bis room, among otber places. Or review tbe videotaped interviews your assistant, Lucie Fairwell, conducted with the nine suspects and witnesses. Use the interviews to try to figure out who's lying and who's the most likely to snap under pressure. Lucie (played by Sheryl Lee of "Twin Peaks" fame) can also give you the lowdown on what the suspects were really doing at the time of the murder.



Follow Brett's route to find out who could have wanted him dead.

Solving the murder may sound like a cinch with all the information at your disposal, but the clock is running, and there's a catch: You don't have six hours of real time. Time is measured according to the game's world, and for every clue you obtain, you lose as much time as it would actually take to collect the information.

When you think you've got the murder solved, hold a press conference. After answering seven of the press corps's ten questions correctly, you're allowed to interview three suspects in detail. Now you'll get the dirt that isn't in the regular testimony—it seems Brett may not have been as pure of heart as he first appeared.

When the interviews are over, make your arrest. If you're correct, you win. If you aren't and time remains, you can keep searching for the killer. But when the timer shows 30 minutes to go, you automatically default to the press conference, where you're on your own.

Who Killed Brett Penance? is a great game. It's initially challenging but easy enough to figure out after two or three tries, which keeps the frustration level down. And you can replay the game with a different outcome: Brett can be shot, strangled, or poisoned by a different culprit each time. Unfortunately, the three scenarios don't differ all that much, and listening to all the same testimony the second time around can be dull. Still, this one's well worth a look by virtual gumshoes looking for a challenge. (Creative Multimedia; 503-241-4351; Win CD, $29.99)



Many clues may be hidden here.



Collect your evidence, then go for a warrant.

☞ Check out all the suspects first. It takes time, but it gives you a feel for the personalities you're dealing with. ☞ Watch for people who seem to know things that they shouldn't. ☞ Even a false arrest can lead to the killer. The wrongly accused can completely exonerate themselves and sometimes incriminate another suspect. ☞ Pay close attention to details. You won't need a lot of them to solve the case, but the press will ask you a lot of picky things before you're allowed to arrest anyone.

PSST!

486SX/25, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, sound card, double-speed CD-ROM drive

GAME PLAY:	F² F² F² F²
GETTING STARTED:	F² F² F² F² F²
GRAPHICS:	F² F² F²
SOUND CHECK:	F² F² F²
VALUE:	F² F² F² F²

Amateur sleuths will went to try their hand at solving this solid mystery.



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Screen shot of World Circuit by Microprose™

DOS

World War II



Fly low and harass the invading Allies at Normandy beach.



By Anthony Lukban

My German BF109 swoops down to within a mere 500 feet of the dirt, maneuvering through a gauntlet of flak and tracers that comes from all directions. These Americans really want to ground my plane, but I'll be damned if I let them do it! Instead, I yank the stick in the direction of a target and deliver a lethal payload. The thump of my Sound Blaster adds a convincing note as shrapnel and debris fill my rear view.



This typical flight-sim scenario comes courtesy of DoMark's World War II, created by the company's Flight Sim Toolkit. The bargain-priced game covers two major events in the Second World War, Midway in the Pacific Theater and D-Day over the shores of Normandy. Choose your side—American, German, or Japanese—and a mission, and the appropriate plane is automatically provided (though some missions do give you a choice of craft).

Although the planes vary (there are a dozen types, from Mustangs to Zeroes to FW190s), a couple of basic cockpit designs repeat themselves in all the aircraft. While not historically correct, at least all the controls are usable. And other than a fuzzy photo of an anonymous woman (who acts as a mascot for all sides), the cockpit graphics are sharp and convincing, especially if you run the game in one of the high-res modes.



Skimming the treetops reveals finely rendered towns, trees, terrain, and military hardware.



But how do these birds fly? Unfortunately, not too well. These planes are vintage—and they fly like it. Using a joystick and the keyboard, some planes rocked so much I couldn't lock my guns on the enemy, leaving me at their mercy during hairy dogfights. If the folks at DoMark were shooting for a shaky flight, they succeeded, but while other flight sims might not be as realistic, at least they're flyable.

On the plus side, the detail of the terrain and military hardware is impressive. I even ran some planes into the ground intentionally to get a closer look at tree branches, tanks, and ships. Compared with flight sims with flat plains and few protuding hills, World War II features a much more interesting vista of rolling hills with varied relief and color—even lighthouses on the French coast and detailed inland towns.

DoMark does especially well with the big bangs. These stringy firework explosions beat out the mushroom clouds and bitmaps found in other sims. Bullets have real trajectory, too. And tracers abound as you fly through the atmospheric haze, just like in the dogfights you see in black-and-white Second World War movies.

Don't expect Falcon or Strike Commander if you load up World War II—you won't find a stirring sound track, scintillating conversation, or stellar sound effects in this box. But then again, you get what you pay for. (DoMark; 800-695-4263; DOS/DOS CD, $24.99)

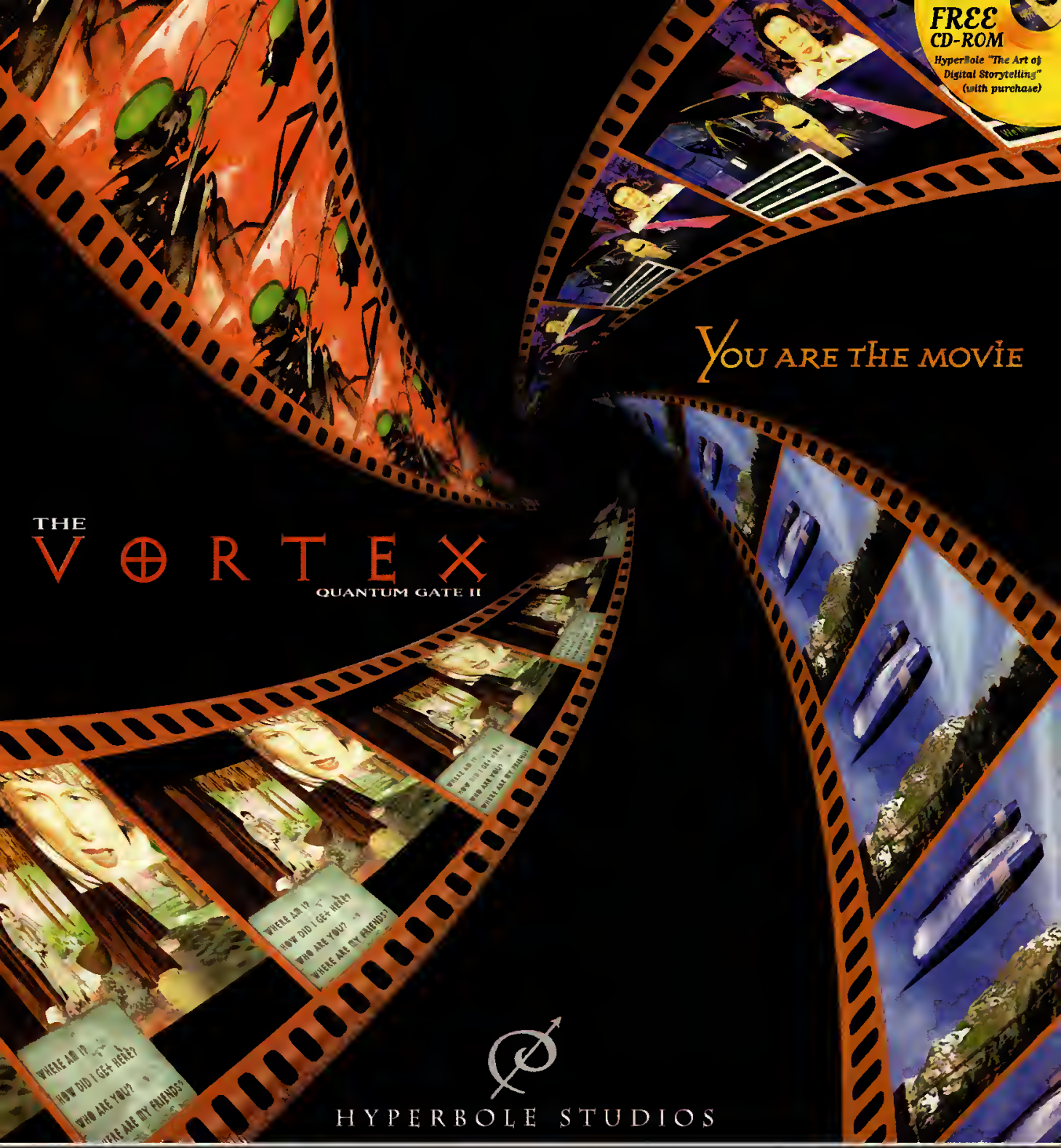
PSST!

☞ Don't oversteer! Your plane's reaction times are sluggish at best. Keep your movements small to avoid losing control.

386, 2MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA, joystick

GAME PLAY:	★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★★

If you're a flight-sim fan who hungers for visual realism, World War II isn't for you. But if your budget is tight and you're looking for a fun and simple way to spend some time in the skies, give it a try.



A vortex rages around you — dangerous, deceptive. A frightening vertigo grabs your imagination as the vortex pulls you under.

The Vortex takes you deeper into the story of Drew Griffin, a young soldier fighting for his life on a distant world. You will experience this story through his eyes and mind. As Drew, you will discover the truth of the Quantum Gate and your choices will decide the fate of two worlds. As Drew, you will try to escape The Vortex.



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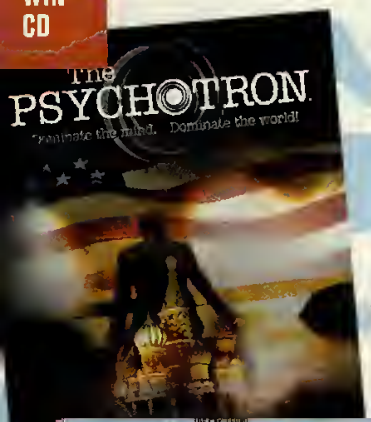
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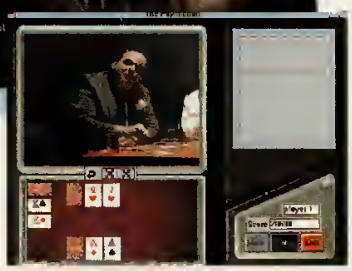
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WIN CD

The Psychotron

By Peter Olafson





These guys don't know how to play—except for keeps.



You'll encounter people of all persuasions on your trail to the Psychotron.



Search the offices carefully. They provide key information early in the game.



This plane went down on the farm, and that's when all the trouble started.

Surprise! Here's a CD-ROM "interactive mystery" that's both interactive and cinematic. The Psychotron, by Merit Software, offers smooth cinematic pans and zooms but also adds the fun so sorely lacking in many adventure games of this genre.

You play a CIA agent assigned to investigate the crash of a plane that was carrying a Psychotronic Generator—a mind-control device—from Russia. Your investigation requires a slew of work, including searching the offices of four other agents, questioning the attendees at a missing agent's funeral, checking out the farm where the plane went down, and playing poker with the missing agent's unsavory colleagues.

Thankfully, Psycbotron always remains a game and doesn't revert to being just a good-looking spectacle. In the agents' offices, for example, you move the mouse carefully around the screen until a question mark surfaces beside the pointer. Click to zoom in on the particular object you're interested in. Then exercise your best search-your-parents'-drawers instincts on files, computers, and tape recorders.

The conversations are even slicker. To draw out information from other characters, you can try courtesy, lies, evasion, and outright come-ons—all with very different results. And when you play five-card stud...well, let's just say that what you say or don't say is more important than the cards you hold. These guys are righteous maniacs: They'll kill you if you fold, and they'll kill you if you don't fold.

They're also good actors. The performances are deliberately broad but richly entertaining. You never have the sense that the developer's secretarial pool is trying its hand at acting.

Another nice touch: The Psychotron can accommodate as many as four players, who compete using a point system. This feature offers at least the potential to make the Psychotron into a party game instead of the traditional solitary exercise.

Don't skimp on the beer and potato salad at your next gathering, though, because the Psycbotron doesn't exactly run like a deer. It is also extremely hard disk intensive, especially for a CD-ROM game. Some minor scene changes took nearly a minute to appear in 800-by-600 mode on a 66MHz 486 machine. In our testing, even with Windows SmartDrive disabled (as the documentation suggests), the video sequences occasionally ran jerkily, and some never ran at all. The video problems largely cleared up when we changed our Windows video driver to support 800-by-600 resolution. (An MPEG version of the game is also available that reportedly produces much higher video quality for those users lucky enough to have an MPEG decoder board in their systems.)

The game's meager documentation consists of a jewel-box-size booklet that devotes only 4½ of its 18 pages to the game and the rest to setup, troubleshooting, and warranty information. Those caveats aside, Merit is certainly onto something good here. (Merit Software; 800-238-4277; Win CD/Win MPEG CD, $69.95)

☞ **Be painstaking in your examination of the CIA offices. Most of the objects of interest are obvious, but a few are not. There's this one particular lamp....** ☞ **Most of the people at the funeral drop hints if given the chance. Don't dismiss the man at the right as just a grave digger.** ☞ **Tell the farmer's wife you're there to remove the plane. She'll be tickled. And whatever you do, don't mention the father's gimpy leg. He may be a loon, but he's sensitive about the bad limb.** ☞ **Walk a fine line during the fourth poker hand. Fold, and you die. Accuse other players of cheating, and you die. Just defend yourself against the charge when the time comes, and make your exit.**

psst!

486SX/25, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive

GAME PLAY: ₤ ₤ ₤ ₤

GETTING STARTED: ₤ ₤

GRAPHICS: ₤ ₤ ₤

SOUND CHECK: ₤ ₤ ₤ ₤

VALUE: ₤ ₤ ₤

Who'd a thunk it? A CD-ROM game that really is a game—albeit one with some technical hassles.

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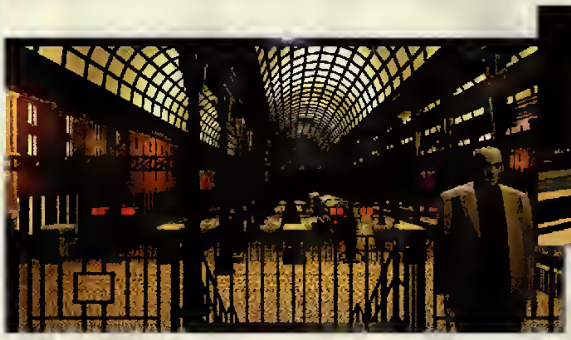
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: IBM PC 286 16 MHz or compatible; IBM PC 386sx 25 MHz or compatible recommended; 640K RAM with VGA; mouse (100% Microsoft compatible); CD-ROM drive (150KB per second or greater, continuous read, 380 ms seek, double speed drive provides better graphic quality); Sound Blaster or 100% compatible card; DOS 3.3 or higher

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Gadget

By James Daly

WIN CD



A train station is the first stop on your investigative journey. Be on the lookout for Horselover's pals.



This futuristic train is your primary means of transportation through Gadget.

Most computer games are really pretty simple: You try to outmaneuver, outscore, outgun, and generally beat the stuffing out of your opponent.

Get ready to toss your hormones in the backyard. In Gadget you don't need killer instinct, just a desire to solve an enjoyably complex mystery. You'll be spared primal satisfaction, but Gadget is guaranteed to deliver a state-of-the-art interactive film experience and show you one of the most inventive computer-generated landscapes you've ever seen.



You'll also need to fly a light plane, so dust off your pilot's license.



Collect gadgets and store them in this duralumin suitcase.

Gadget is a new Japanese import that is clearly the shape of things to come in electronic storytelling. There's a game element, sure, but the thrill is really in the chase through a gorgeously rendered but bleak urban landscape peopled with creepy hollow-eyed residents and futuristic technology.

The story begins in a cheap, downtown hotel room. Start poking around, and you quickly figure out that you're a gumshoe about to stumble upon your next case. An apocalyptic radio newscast sets you in motion.

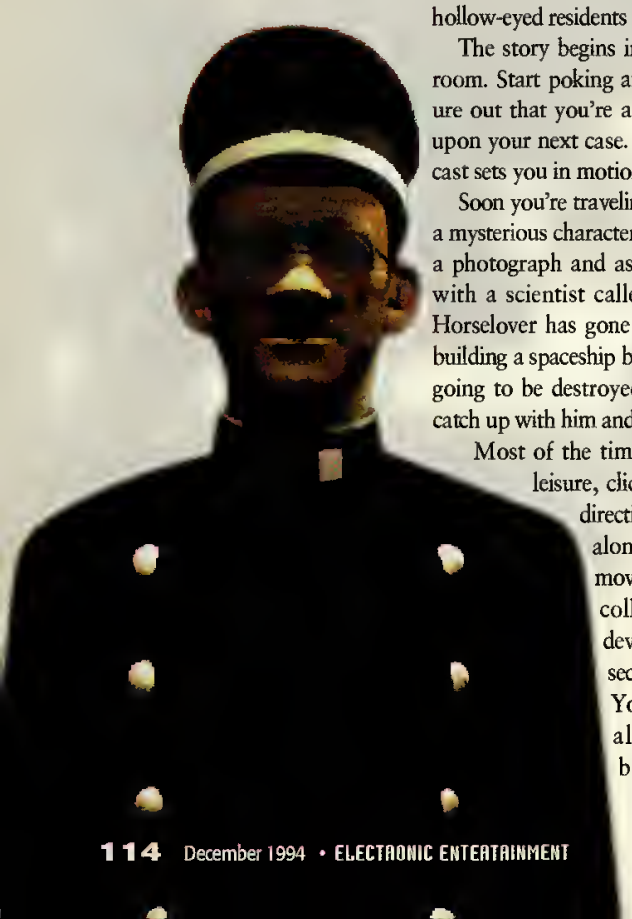
Soon you're traveling down to the lobby, where a mysterious character named Slowslop hands you a photograph and asks you to establish contact with a scientist called Horselover. Seems that Horselover has gone around the bend, and he's building a spaceship because he thinks the world is going to be destroyed by a comet. You have to catch up with him and figure out what's going on.

Most of the time you're free to explore at leisure, clicking on arrows to indicate direction. Other times you tumble along by viewing a QuickTime movie. The game requires you to collect five fanciful high-tech devices in order to unlock the secret at the heart of the story. You'll need each of these items along the way. A pair of binoculars, for instance, shows you events in the near future.

The journey is a long one (it can easily take more than three hours to complete the game), but the extraordinary graphics make this world a pleasure to explore. Along the way you pass through an odd science museum, take a dozen or so train rides, and hop aboard a small plane. But the real clues will be offered by a bizarre cast of zombielike characters that you pump for information by clicking on them.

As advanced as Gadget is, it's not without its rough spots. There are times on the train when you feel like you have exhausted all interview possibilities and are simply waiting around for the next stop.

But if you really want to get an idea of the potential of CD-ROM and aren't in the mood to blow away dinky computer-generated enemies, hop aboard Gadget. It's one ride you won't soon forget. (Synergy; 800-427-6100; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.99)



Even if you've spoken with someone before, approach them again after you've done some exploring and see if they have anything further to add. Many do. At stations along your journey, you meet scientists who say they are Horselover's associates and can give you helpful information. Some are playing it straight; others aren't. Be skoptical.

PSST!

486/33, MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, 8MB RAM, Super VGA, sound board, mouse, double-speed CD-ROM drive, MSCDEX 2.2

GAME PLAY:	3
GETTING STARTED:	5
GRAPHICS:	5
SOUND CHECK:	4
VALUE:	3

Splashy graphics and a twisted, engrossing story line make Gadget a fine, dark ride.

"A Must-Have!" – CD-ROM Entertainment

"You'll find out more about the ship than you'd learn watching a thousand TV episodes." – Electronic Entertainment



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Dominus



Welcome to the world of Dominus. It's win or die here.

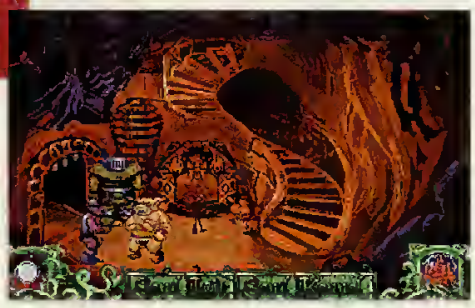
By Barry Brenesal

DOS

Dominus is a role-playing fantasy game. No, it's a strategy-based resource-allocation game. Wait a minute. It's a fast and furious arcade-style adventure.

Let me start again.

In Dominus, you are overlord of a land under invasion by eight different clans. They can attack anywhere in your 24 wilderness regions, even moving into your villages and defensive tunnels. Your eight strongholds are their next target, where they plan to establish enemy bases and cut off your supplies. Finally, if they're not stopped, they work their way up through the eight floors of your castle.



Make 'em talk in your Interrogation Room.

Use a variety of tricks and traps.





Combine resources to produce potent spells.

Each clan craves one of your kingdom's eight major resources. Clan members gain strength when they find and consume it. If they get enough to eat, they ultimately evolve into high-level Scouts, Berserkers, and Mages. To make matters worse, clans don't invade individually. Instead, they usually appear in groups, so discovering a single clan's weakness doesn't guarantee victory.

But take heart: You have enormous assets at your disposal. Those same eight resources (notice the pattern here?) can be combined to produce 70 powerful spells in your Magic Room. You can also unite 20 different triggers and hazards to create 100 devious traps.

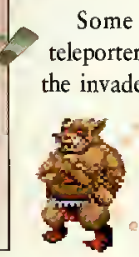
Some traps, such as nets and teleporters, capture rather than kill the invaders. When you snag a live one, it's off to the Interrogation Room. Choose from several verbal approaches to elicit information about the captive's clan, including its secret spells and objectives. Work at this long enough, and you may even win over a clan to your side. At the very least, you can move captured agents into your kennel, swelling your army's ranks. If that's not enough, bioengineer a new monster from two existing ones. The result will randomly combine the strengths and weaknesses of its parents. You may come up with a winner—or an incredibly strong, tough, fast character who faints at the sight of a frog.



When things get too hectic, buy time by employing your four generals at lengthy tasks. They can lead armies to designated areas, build and allocate traps, gather resources, or research specific enemy clans.

If delegation isn't your style, take the field yourself. You've got a flying chariot—why not use it? Visit the battle site and cast powerful spells against the invading hordes in real-time arcade-style action.

Now you can understand my earlier confusion. If you play Dominus through your generals, it's a micromanaged, resource-allocation game. Work out of the Trap, Magic, and Interrogation Rooms, and role playing predominates. Take to the field yourself, and arcade action is the name of the game. One thing's certain: Dominus is an attractive, flexible, and challenging game that's never the same twice. (U.S. Gold; 415-693-0297; DOS, $49.95; DOS CD, $54.95)



PSST!

☞ If you plan to build spells and traps, set a general or two to gather resources. You don't want to run out of ingredients at a crucial moment. ☞ Capture a few invaders quickly. Find out their weaknesses, and produce monsters to exploit them. ☞ Your strongholds are just as important as your castle. If you lose one, you lose access to one of your all-important resources. ☞ Making an ally of a clan saves you from battling as many as 100 monsters.

386/25, 4MB RAM, OOS 5.0, VGA, Sound Blaster, mouse

GAME PLAY:	★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★★★

An unusual and intriguing combination of action, strategy, and role playing.

Everyone Who Plays This Game Gets a Toaster



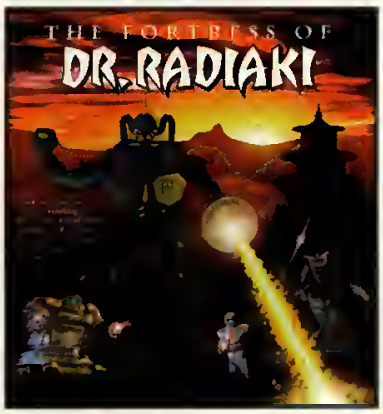
The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki is a thrilling adventure, mixing carnage with a sizzling sense of humor.

You will confront scores of different adversaries including sword wielding samurai, stealthy ninja warriors, robots with toasters for heads, mutated alligators and many more.

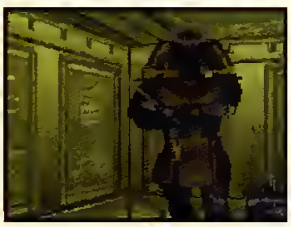
You must use all your wits to find your way through the cavernous fortress and defeat the Machiavellian designs of the horribly deformed Dr. Radiaki.

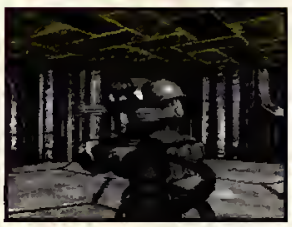
The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki is a landmark in computer games. You are free to move in any direction and blast anything that tries to do the same in this virtual reality, 3-D world. Backgrounds are rendered on the fly and unbelievably detailed characters move smoothly through the labyrinth.

"You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll kill everything that moves. It's the kind of special happiness you'll only find in The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki"
Gary Meredith-PC Gamer



Enter at your own risk... you may never be the same again!







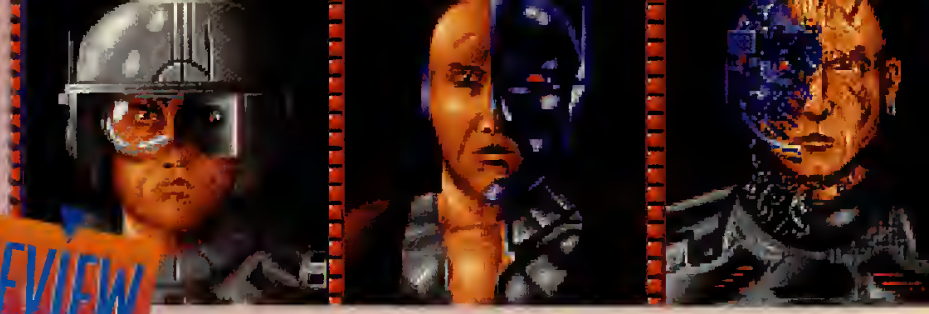
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Reunion



PREVIEW

By John Sauer

Got some people you haven't seen in a while? I mean a long while—since waaaay before high school. How about a Reunion? Only this time around, you won't be needing your yearbook.

This little get-together is Reunion, a space-strategy UK import created by Grandslam Video. It features smokin' graphics and animated cut scenes, plus enough invention, planetary exploration, and colonization to keep all but the most hard-core strategy/sim players happy. A hip cyberpunk plot line adds depth and color to the game play. Even if you've been stung by recent CD-ROM space sims, this one might fill that void in your cybersoul.



You can build colonies with structures of all types, even buildings just used for recreation.



You cut a dashing figure as the president of New Earth in Reunion.

Lead your people well, and you might get back to Earth.





Select advisors carefully because they can make the difference between success and failure.

You begin Reunion as the male or female (your choice) president of New Earth, a colony settled after an exodus from the strife and chaos of our little green planet. Your long-term objective is to return to Earth to see what's up with the old folks at home. In the short term, you must build and expand, invent and modernize, and create a thriving stronghold for mankind in your star system.

As president, you hire advisors who bend your ear with suggestions. They range from raw fighters with abrasive personalities and seasoned combat veterans to wizened old professors and deep thinkers. Each has his or her own price, as does everything on New Earth. Adding spice to the mix are alien races just waiting to be discovered and, quite possibly, fought. Reunion is reminiscent of Dynamix's Alien Legacy, but with a harder edge.



The tavern behind your control room holds many strange characters. It's a good place to gather news.

In order to fund growth and expansion, you must tax your population. Tax them at a low or average rate, and they love you. But raise the taxes, and all sorts of interesting things happen (no, your character can't play a saxophone). The real conundrums arise when you need money to build structures but worry that a tax increase might cause a rebellion.

Most every action in Reunion—from consulting your advisors and building to inventing new technologies and exploring space—happens with spectacular graphics. The game's interface is fairly easy to understand, though launching ships takes a little practice.

What we've seen of Reunion leave us wanting more. We spotted no obvious bugs or deletions in our play through. Let's hope that Grandslam follows through with a game as good as the preview disc. (Merit Software; 800-238-4277; DOS CD, $59.95)

PSST!

☞ If your game seems to be at a plateau, send your advisors to school. What they learn could spawn a new wave of development. ☞ When taxes are low, your people usually love you. Raise them, and they begin to hate you. ☞ Expansion and colonization are best taken slowly. Rush, and you drain resources and cash. ☞ You can't launch satellites without the right vehicles.



Just when you thought you were over *Tetris*®,

Alexey Pajitnov dares you to BreakThru!™

The Russian master who created Tetris now introduces BreakThru—one of a series of great new puzzle games.

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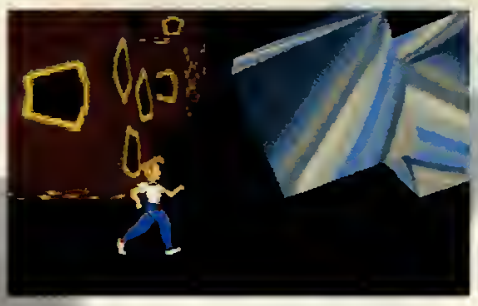
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Gridders

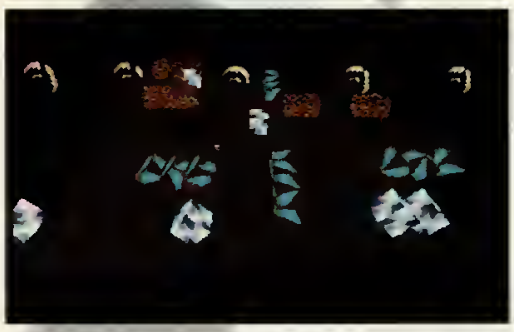


Help Zack avoid Killer Gridders.

By Christine Grech

In the year 2049, it's hip to be square—if you're on that resource-depleted planet known as Earth. With ecological disaster almost certain, the United World Council turns to the Gridders Corporation for help. Gridders Corp. is in the cold-fusion business, and its (almost) fully automated factory is run by mechanical cubes named after their parent company.

As Zack, you're the company's sole remaining human employee. The game begins with your termination notice and a mysterious plea for help, which warns you of a horrible secret hidden in the basement of Gridders Corp.



Playing with blocks in Gridders is a little more dangerous than when you were a kid.

Gridders the game, from newcomer Tetragon, is something new for 3DO titles: a pure puzzler. But while this 3-D game is a cerebral challenge, good reflexes are also key as you maneuver your way through a variety of obstacles, not the least of which are steady streams of Killer Gridders coming at you from all directions.

The game comprises 36 levels that descend through the factory. On each level you must solve a puzzle by forcing Gridders to release the coveted pyramid keys that you need to progress to the next level. The good news is that there's more than one right way to complete a level.

You manipulate the game's 16-by-16-square grid by pushing, dodging, and blocking Gridders. You must also contend with an endless flow of unique mechanized blocks—from Generators and Drones to Killers and Anti-Buddies.

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What's lurking in the basement of Gridders Corp? It's up to Zack to find out.

The puzzles start off easy. But you'll soon find yourself pulling your hair out as you try to discover the exact sequence of moves required to get the Gridders to give up the keys while simultaneously keeping yourself out of harm's way.

In order to successfully get through a level without being leveled by a Killer Gridder, you need to know the properties of each Gridder type—which of the tumbling blocks are helpful, which are harmful, and what rules they follow. For example, Buddy Gridders aid you by mimicking your every move and blocking impending Killer Gridders. But your Buddy can hinder success if you don't know how to shake him fast.

The game's 3-D graphics are quite good, although its two default views are too close and too far away to give you a good vantage point. You'll want to use the custom-zoom feature to set the perspective somewhere in between. The accompanying music is adequate, but there could be more variety for each level. And the audio effects are pretty bland, especially given the critical role they play in alerting you to needed keys.

These minor complaints aside, Gridders is one new kid on the block that 3DO-owning puzzle fans won't want to miss. (Tetragon; 214-680-8134; 3DO, $59.99)

GAME PLAY:	3
GETTING STARTED:	4
GRAPHICS:	3
SOUND CHECK:	3
VALUE:	3

Gridders is a refreshing 3DO puzzle game that exercises the mind as well as the thumb.

PSST!

☞ Start each level in bird's-eye view so you can identify the exit square before you begin moving about the grid. When you're ready to play, set the view to custom zoom. ☞ While you're surveying the scene, take a few moments to check out the pattern of the Gridders' movement, noting safe squares and ones where you're sure to be squashed. ☞ Remember, Gridders like to travel in groups of two or three. You'll be able to cross their path if you wait until the cluster has rolled past. ☞ Pay attention to the titles of each level. They often point you toward a solution. ☞ Listen to your cyberdog Fidex. If he barks, danger is close by. ☞ Patience is a virtue: The solution to a level, including all bonus levels, might depend upon the Gridders moving themselves into a specific formation—and sometimes that takes time. ☞ If you blow a level twice (and use up all but one life), head to practice mode to figure out a solution. Three strikes mean you're out—and you're bounced back to the previous level.

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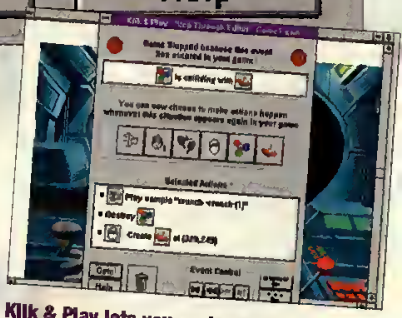
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Klik & Play

By Christopher Lindquist



Choose from a variety of sample games.



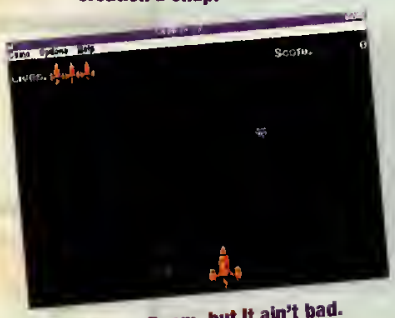
Klik & Play lets you assign actions to game parts easily.

Ever finish playing a game only to think to yourself, "Heck, I could have designed something more interesting and fun—if I knew how to program." Well, here's your chance, and you won't have to struggle through four years of programming courses, either.

The name of this game is Klik & Play—but don't go looking for any rule books. Klik & Play from Maxis is designed to let all kinds of game players double as game builders. And while you may not create the next Doom or SimCity with Klik & Play's easy-to-use electronic toolbox, you sure can have a good time trying.



Klik & Play's menus make game creation a snap.



It ain't Doom, but it ain't bad.

The concept behind Klik & Play is simple: You start with a "storyboard" that shows thumbnail sketches of your game's levels. Then you click on various pieces of a game—such as backgrounds, characters, sounds, and objects—to drag them into position on a game level. Finally, you attach actions to the pieces. For example, you might tell Klik & Play to say "Game Over" and play an explosion sound when an asteroid runs into a spaceship.

What's great about Klik & Play is that you don't have to plan ahead of time for what actions might take place. Instead, you simply start playing the game as you're building it. If an interaction between two pieces occurs—a ball hits a character, for instance—Klik & Play displays a screen that lets you decide what happens next.

Once you've worked through all the possible interactions, you can save your game as a stand-alone program that anyone with a Windows-based PC can play, even if they don't own Klik & Play. This ability to share games may be the product's best feature. After all, how many times will you want to play your own game when you already know how it ends?

Klik & Play comes with a large selection of sample games, backgrounds, animated characters and objects, and sounds. If those aren't enough, you can create your own art and objects with the included graphics and animation editors or record your own sounds and import them into Klik & Play.

Klik & Play's interface is fairly straightforward, though it may take beginners a couple of hours of practice to get acquainted with the toolbars full of objects and the various editors required for different elements of game creation. Your first games will probably bear a disturbing resemblance to Asteroids, Space Invaders, and Donkey Kong, too.

That doesn't mean you can't produce some fairly slick games with Klik & Play. This is one of those "what you put into it, you get out of it" kind of ventures. You can produce something to satisfy small kids, or your curiosity, in just a few minutes. But if you feel like putting in the hours and some serious effort, Klik & Play is capable of producing shareware-quality games.

Regardless of Klik & Play's limitations, Maxis has provided a firm and fun foundation for getting yourself into the game-design business. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Windows/Win CD, $54.95)

☞ Fight the urge to drop tons of objects into your first games. You have to assign actions to all of them, and you'll soon be bogged down in the minutiae instead of enjoying the creative process. ☞ Spend a few minutes opening up the libraries of objects before you start game building. That way you get an overview of what pieces are available. ☞ Game size is limited only by the memory in your machine. But keep in mind that if you want to share your games, other people may not have as much RAM as you do.

386, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, mouse

GAME PLAY:	N/A
GETTING STARTED:	E² E² E²
GRAPHICS:	E² E² E²
SOUND CHECK:	E² E² E²
VALUE:	E² E² E² E²

A great place to start for anyone who's ever wanted to design and build computer games.

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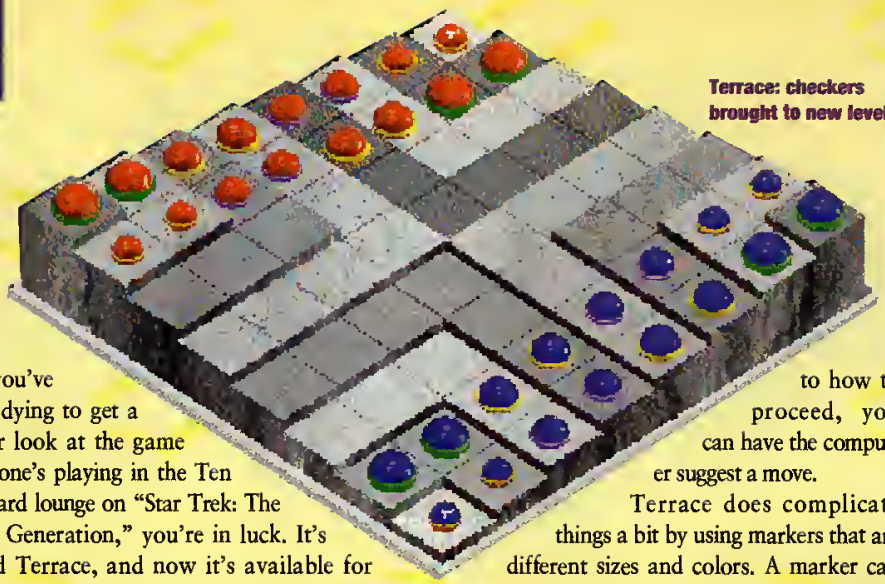


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Terrace



Terrace: checkers brought to new levels.

By Joel Enos

If you've been dying to get a closer look at the game everyone's playing in the Ten Forward lounge on "Star Trek: The Next Generation," you're in luck. It's called Terrace, and now it's available for Windows. How'd the game get from the Enterprise to your computer? Actually, before it became a TV star, it was just a regular board game that gamesman Buzz Siler had invented as an alternative to chess.



Terrace is a high-tech game in a low-tech setting.

And it's a challenging alternative. Fairly strong chess players will have trouble beating Terrace—even on the beginner level. This game should have a warning label on the box: "May cause irritability and loss of sleep." After losing your first few games in a row, you may want to engage in physical combat.

Don't take the unbeatability as a negative; Terrace is a mind boggler of the best sort. The rules of movement are simple enough to trick you into thinking you've got it figured out, but the overall game is complex enough that you'll be taken by surprise time and time again.

The virtual playing board is multilevel, with markers that move up, down, and around the rows of steps, or terraces. The object is to overtake and capture your opponent's T—a small marker with a T on its top—or to get your T into the opposing side's lowest corner square.

The rules are deceptively brief: You can jump up or down only one level each move, you can slide to any space on your current level as long as you don't run into an opposing piece, and you can capture another player's marker only by jumping diagonally down onto it. Be careful: If you jump down onto one of your own men, you lose it just as if your opponent had landed on it. Beginners will find the undo function a saving grace. And if you're at a total loss as to how to proceed, you can have the computer suggest a move.

Terrace does complicate things a bit by using markers that are different sizes and colors. A marker can capture only those that are the same size as itself or smaller. That means the big green marker can take out any other piece, but only another big green one can capture it. You have just four of these Terrace equivalents of chess queens.

Double-clicking brings up the game's controller menu, in which you can adjust sound, game recorder, and the timer. You can also choose from three backgrounds and two board designs.



Terrace starts out looking easy—then you begin to play.

If you'd rather spend some time learning the game against a human opponent, try out the two-player modem feature. If you're lucky, a flesh-and-blood opponent may make a dumb move—the computer never does. (Siler/Siler Ventures; 503-635-6333; Windows, approximately $20)

☞ If a high-level piece gets surrounded, move one of your lower-level pieces into the high-level piece's capture zone, then take the low-level piece to escape. ☞ Don't be afraid to cannibalize your own pieces if it means getting to an advantageous position more quickly. ☞ Most games end with one player's T moving to the opposite corner. A good strategy is to protect the corner with a large piece.

386, 2MB RAM, Windows 3.1

GAME PLAY:	★★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★★★★

This is an enticing game that will keep you aggravated—and occupied—for hours on end.



Are you frustrated with your joystick couse its just not meeting the demonds ot your tovorite PC gomes? Does it lock thot extro thrust you need to overtoke the enemy? Is it missing thot pin-point occurocy ond superior control? Well, don't get mod. Get LETHAL!

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How To Use the New Entertainment Software Rating System

What is the Entertainment Software Rating Board?

The ESRB is a newly created independent board that has, with the support of the industry, developed a standardized rating system for interactive entertainment products.

What the Ratings Do

The ESRB ratings are designed to give consumers information about what's in an interactive video or computer entertainment title and for which ages it's appropriate. They are not meant to tell you what to buy or rent or to serve as the only basis for choosing a product. In addition to the ratings, consumers should always consult product packaging for additional information about the product and should apply their own tastes and standards in making final purchase or rental decisions.

What to Look For

Ratings: Consumers should look on the front of the package for the ESRB rating symbol, which gives information about ages for which the product is appropriate.

Content Descriptors: In addition to the rating, consumers should check for important content information (also called "descriptors") in the black-and-white box on the back of the package. These content descriptors give more details about the product in terms of violence, sexual themes, language, and other areas that may concern some consumers. For example, the skill level that is necessary for young players to enjoy the product or animated depictions of violence. If there is no content information on the back of the package, the Rating Board believes that the product does not include content that must be highlighted.

The Five Rating Categories

Look for these ratings on the front of the package and, for more information, look for content descriptors on the back of the package.



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Titles rated "Early Childhood (EC)" are suitable for children ages three and older and do not contain any material that parents would find inappropriate. Check the content descriptors box on the back of the package to see if children need reading, computer, or other skills to fully enjoy these products.



Kids to Adult

Titles rated "Kids to Adult (K–A)" are suitable for persons ages six and older. These titles will appeal to people of many ages and tastes. They may contain minimal violence, some comic mischief (for example, slapstick comedy), or some crude language.



Teen

Titles rated "Teen (T)" are suitable for persons ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violent content, profanity, and/or mild sexual themes.





Mature

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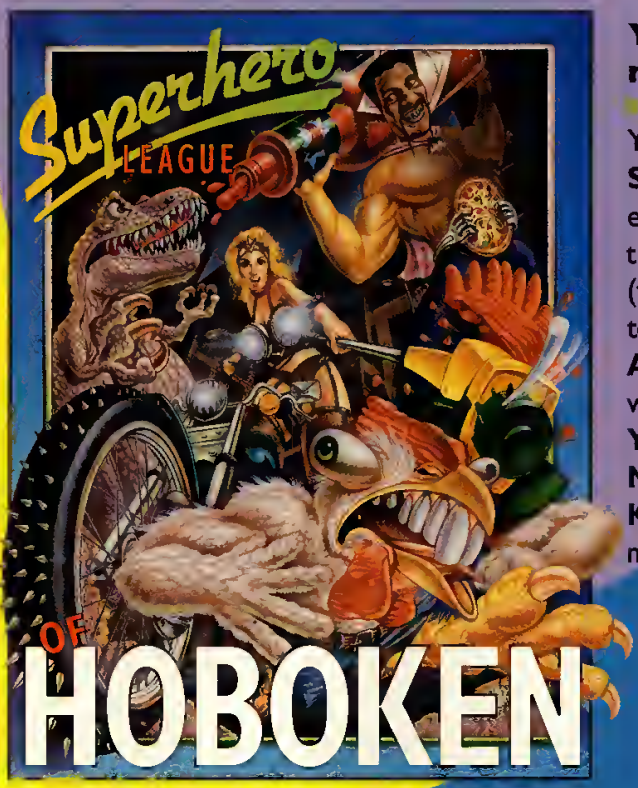


– COMPUTER GAME REVIEW

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GOLDEN TRIAD AWARD
COMPUTER GAME REVIEW

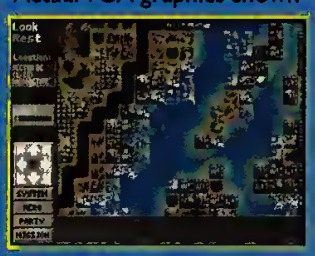
"A unique blend of adventure and role-playing, colorful and challenging"
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Actual VGA graphics shown



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Game design by Steve Meretzky

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Road Rash

By Rick Raymo



Race on five texture-mapped tracks in Thrash or Big Time mode.

For some people, winning is everything—and they'll do it by any means necessary. If you're that type, Road Rash for 3DO by Electronic Arts is for you. Fire up the ol' rice burner and wail. Hurtle down highways and city streets like a crazed hybrid of man and machine—trashing pedestrians, burning cops, and treating the other racers to sheer sphincter-releasing panic as you send them shredding across the asphalt. Absolute insanity? Maybe.

But this full-fledged adrenaline boost sure cures the ills of a ho-hum 9-to-5 existence.



Nail pedestrians for fun, but they'll slow you down a bit—just like speed bumps.



It's a bird...it's a plane...It's a flying Rasher whose bike is now high-dollar trash.

Road Rash pits motorcycle riders against each other in an all-out war to win, or at least place second or third. You kick, club, punch, and chain-whip your way through opposing racers on your way to the finish line—and a chance to compete in the next race. You must also avoid some 600 highway obstacles, including cars, animals, guardrails, signs, and buildings. Winning fills your wallet too, so you can shop for better, faster bikes.



Listen to six major bands on the jukebox.

Road Rash keeps a grip on most of the features that made it popular on the Sega Genesis and also includes the high-tech bells and whistles required by CD-ROM fans. Video sequences appear before and after races. The disc also includes tunes from six popular bands such as Soundgarden, Paw, and Monster Magnet. Unfortunately, they're available only at intermissions—during races you have to listen to a standard (and somewhat dull) sound track instead.

The game has two modes of play: Thrash and Big Time. In Thrash you choose one of the five tracks, hit the road, and move on to the next track if you garner one of the top three spots. You can take your machine with you to the next race, but your progress through the levels can't be saved. Big Time lets you choose a racer, spend money on a bike, get info on the other Rashers and courses, and race your way from level to level, saving your game after every five wins. Two players can climb on, but only by taking turns; there's no split-screen option like the one in Road Rash II for the Genesis. Road Rash II's rearview mirrors are MIA, too.

The gist? Road Rash's graphics are extremely realistic, and the full-motion video isn't bad if you don't mind watching rejects from the William Shatner School of Acting. The all-important game feel is solid and exciting, with easy and comfortable controls. The nebulous sound effects should have had more impact, but the well-chosen tunes from the six bands add to the game's feel (when you can hear them). Overall, Road Rash for 3DO more than captures the surging heat of its predecessors. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $69.95)

☞ If you have a slow bike, fight more. With a fast bike, you can pull away from attackers. ☞ Heavier characters such as Bose have to fight more to make up for slower speed. ☞ Everybody hates Cindy, but she's the fastest racer and gets the most money up front. ☞ The hostility of the other racers increases as you hit them and as you move up in levels. ☞ Race tracks again once you've qualified on them to get more money and a better bike. ☞ Schmooze after races to get info about bikes—and to figure out who's mad at you. ☞ If you hear a bike coming, hang on the yellow or white lines, but be on the lookout for pedestrians. ☞ Try the city sidewalks. They have traction equal to the road. ☞ For fun look for the businessman who'll hit you with the carp (he also drops his pants and shows his red heart shorts). And listen for the cow who moos, "Let's rumble."

PSST!

GAME PLAY:	4
GETTING STARTED:	4
GRAPHICS:	5
SOUND CHECK:	3
VALUE:	4

Road Rash is a solid, fast-paced keeper. It's not perfect, but it's a good game on a system on which winners are still few and far between.

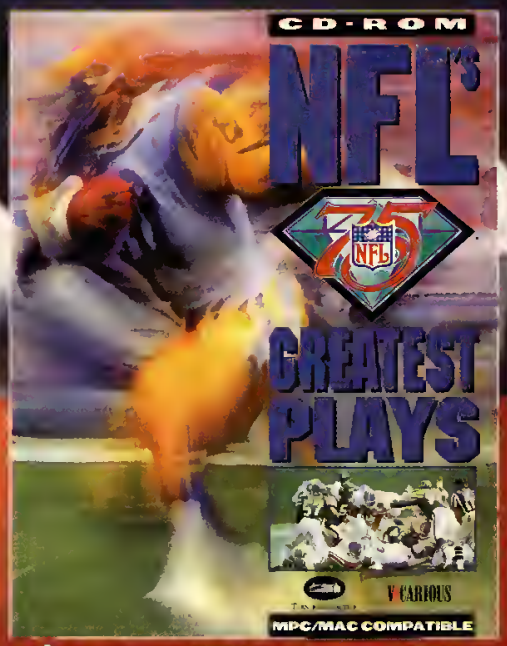
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MAC

Eat My Photons!

By Fredric Paul



There are only three rules in this game: drive, fly, and shoot.

It's two, two, two games in one. Half futuristic tank battle and half space-based arcade flight sim, Eat My Photons! offers the best of both moons to Macintosh gamers.

GAME PLAY:	
GETTING STARTED:	
GRAPHICS:	
SOUND CHECK:	
VALUE:	

Not a lot of plot to dull the fun of running around and blowing things up. And you get to do it on land and in space.

Just as its manual claims, Eat My Photons! makes it easy to simply "start blowing things up," but there is a rudimentary plot that sets the stage for this wanton destruction. Your task is to defend the Omega system star bases from relentless enemy drones (large, moving mines). Eventually, even the drones start firing back, and new and more deadly fighters appear as you progress.

Before the mayhem can begin, you must choose a ground- or space-based mission, at one of an unlimited number of randomly generated levels. You can easily switch back and forth between the two arenas before you start each level.

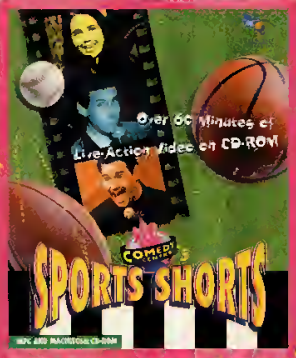
The ground missions place you in a texture-mapped world reminiscent of Battle Tech or Spectre VR. A space mission involves you in an X-Wing-style, 3-D battle among the swirling stars and planets. Forget realistic flight physics—this is action-arcade stuff. The shapes move and scroll smoothly and quickly, but with

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THE COMEDY CLUB IN A BOX!

only 16-color graphics, the scenery looks vaguely cheesy instead of high tech.



Choose your weapon—tanks or spaceships.

You start with three ships and a pair of bases. Run out of either, and it's game over. Earn additional ships every three levels (to progress from level to level you must clear it of all drones), and get another base every 2,500 points.

To turn the bad guys into moon dust, you're armed with a laser cannon for close-up destruction and a limited supply of radar-guided missiles to deal long-range devastation. You can also release radar-confusing chaff to throw off enemy missiles.

Radar targeting helps you find your foe amid the stars and/or mountains. You press a key to have the computer locate a target, while a complex but effective box-and-line arrangement points you toward it. You can also employ auto-targeting to help you find one of the glowing energy spheres that will recharge your shields and lasers.

Control the game with the keyboard or a mouse, but if you want a fighting chance in the space mission you need a joystick. That's because Eat My Photons! incorporates inertia, meaning you keep going in one direction until you start to move in another. It's tricky, but once you get the hang of compensating for the oversteer, it makes for a better game.

The action takes place to the tune of an original—though repetitive—musical score and plenty of beeps, bangs, and explosions. As the game heats up, so does the sound track.

So if you like fast arcade-style action and have a penchant for blowing things up, Eat My Photons! delivers just what you're looking for. (Eccentric Software; 800-436-6758; Mac, $59.95)

☞ Press the R key to change the range of your radar. All the targets blur together at the default setting. ☞ It's tempting to blast away at the nearest drones and fighters. Don't. Protect your base, or the game will be over fast. At early levels you're better off avoiding the fighters in order to hunt drones. At higher levels, take care of the fighters, or they'll turn your ship to shrapnel. ☞ If you're chasing a fighter in space, hit the Z key to focus on the target in the heads-up display so you can quickly tell where it's going. ☞ Throttle back when shooting at close range or risk overrunning your target. ☞ Unlike in Spectre VR, running into stuff hurts! ☞ Extensive damage to your ship can knock out weapons and thrusters without totally destroying your craft. If power doesn't come back quickly, give up and hit Esc to self-destruct and start over.

PSST!

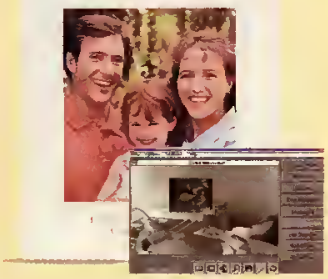
To get to the hard stuff quickly, hit Command-W at the mission screen to jump to any level.

CHEAT

68030 16-color Macintosh, 2.5MB RAM, System 7.0

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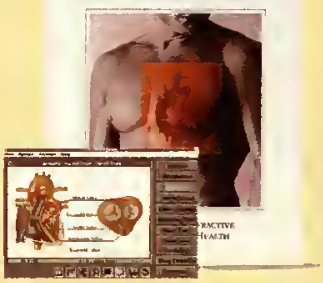
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DOS
CD

PREVIEW

NASCAR Racing

By Harry McCracken



Some judicious drafting may help your cause.

With last year's splendid IndyCar Racing, Papyrus Design Group came up with a winner of a simulation that outpaced other [illegible] racing games in both realism and excitement. This year, Papyrus is shooting for the electronic equivalent of NASCAR's Winston Cup with NASCAR Racing, a game that brings IndyCar's exceptional qualities to the world of stock-car racing.



A variety of camera angles keeps you on top of the action.

Like its predecessor, NASCAR boasts incredibly detailed 3-D graphics and a passion for accuracy that makes it both tougher and more fun than run-of-the-mill racing simulations. But just as in real-life racing, some striking differences mark the IndyCar and NASCAR variants of the sport. The stock car that you drive in NASCAR is much heavier than an IndyCar, it accelerates with less pep, and it's more of a challenge to steer. You also get a working rearview mirror this time around, plus analog dashboard gauges instead of IndyCar's digital ones. Even the excellent sound effects contribute to the stock-car feel—your auto emits a full-bodied growl, for instance, as opposed to the high-pitched whine of an IndyCar.



You won't win this way.

The richness of Papyrus's simulation lets you approach NASCAR in at least two distinct ways. You can go for the thrills, simply heading for the track without modifying the standard car the game provides. If you're more scientifically inclined, however, you may end up spending as much time in the garage as on the speedway, tweaking your car for maximum performance.

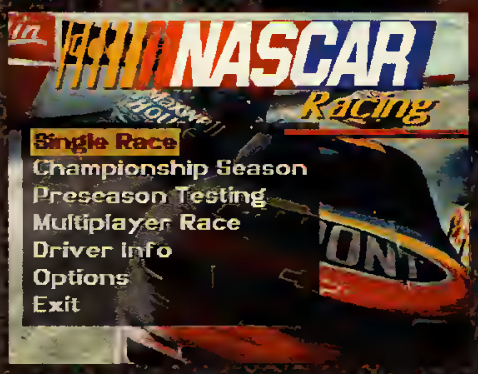


Stick to the groove, or forget about winning.

From a technological standpoint, NASCAR's biggest advance over IndyCar is its high-resolution graphics. While IndyCar and most other games with fast-paced animation use VGA graphics, NASCAR employs Super VGA. The resulting detail is so impressive that you would feel like slowing down to read the billboards if the competition weren't speeding by at more than 200 miles an hour.

Of course, there's a reason that few games offer full-blown Super VGA graphics: They demand serious PC horsepower. Papyrus says that the game may require a Pentium PC with at least 8MB of RAM to operate at full power. It runs on a 486DX2/66 but automatically reduces the level of visual detail to maintain speedy performance. Papyrus also plans a low-resolution, floppy-disk version of NASCAR with less imposing hardware requirements.

The preliminary version of NASCAR Racing we played included seven real NASCAR racetracks. Papyrus plans to pack even more tracks into the finished product, but the company probably won't be able to offer Daytona (home of the legendary Daytona 500) because of that track's licensing agreements with Sega. Even so, this game provides heart-pounding driving action that should please any stock-car fan. (Papyrus Design Group; 800-836-1802; DOS/DOS CD; approximately $74.95)



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DOS CD

Mad Dog McCree II: The Lost Gold





If you're fast enough, you'll get a chance to slap leather with Mad Dog himself. If you're not, it's a quick ride to Boot Hill.

By Christopher Lindquist

If you like your spaghetti westerns with meatballs, get ready: Mad Dog is back.

Mad Dog McCree II: The Lost Gold is the sequel to Mad Dog McCree, the Eastwood-meets-"F Troop" video shoot-'em-up that made its way from the arcade to the PC last year. This time Mad Dog and his band of outlaws (wanted as much for bad acting as for acting bad) have stolen a treasure chest from the local padre. It's up to you to retrieve the gold and tell Mad Dog he's been a bad dog.



You'll have to beat some ominous odds to make it out of this game alive.

Along the road to returning the gold, you meet up with a collection of outlaws who you must gun down before they draw a bead on you. All this carnage is made easy with the game's simple point-and-shoot interface. When a bad guy (or gal) appears, simply move the mouse cursor onto your target and hit the left button. If your six-shooter runs out of ammo, drop the cursor to the bottom right corner of the screen and click with the right button to reload.



Each guide takes a different route to the gold, but all of them get you there eventually.

Several locals are willing to lend a hand as you try to retrieve the treasure. Early in the game you are asked to select a guide to help you find your way. Each stereotypical character (Shooting Beaver, Buckskin Bonnie, and the Professor) takes his or her own route to the gold. So if you finish the game with one guide, you can go back and try again with another.

It's not as easy as it sounds, especially if you play the game on the Hard level (Wimp and Easy are the other options). Some of your adversaries are fast, while others present you with tiny targets—kill zones get even smaller as you raise the game's difficulty setting. Later stages of the game get even tougher by randomizing where the bad guys appear.

Another annoying difficulty with Mad Dog II is more a symptom of today's video technology than a planned piece of game play: The nearly full-screen video doesn't look too bad, but the images are sometimes so dark and fuzzy that you can't tell where a bad guy is shooting from. Increasing the brightness of your monitor can help, but Mad Dog II for the PC is still a long way from Laserdisc quality.

Nonetheless, Mad Dog II carries on the tradition of mindless violence, razor-thin plot, moderately dazzling explosions, and poor acting that made Mad Dog McCree a camp classic. Think of it as one of those late-night "made for cable" westerns, only you're the one doing the shooting. (IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio; 800-898-8842; DOS CD, $59.95)



It's just amazing what the right bullet in the wrong place can do to a building.

☞ Sometimes you have to shoot things, not people. Exploding lanterns and jugs can even up an unfair fight. ☞ Get used to shooting the longhorn skulls. They give you extra ammo and become a necessity later in the game. ☞ Having trouble guessing where and when the next bandito is going to pop up? Try to time them after the CD-ROM drive lights up. ☞ Reload at every opportunity. There's nothing worse than getting the drop on someone, only to hear a heart-stopping click. ☞ If you're having a tough time getting through a field of outlaws, start saving the game after each person you shoot. You can return to that precise point no matter how many times you die. ☞ Some characters are tougher than others. Watch out for "dead" outlaws who suddenly get back up to give it another go.

PSST!

386/25, 640KB RAM, DOS 3.3, VGA, sound card, mouse

GAME PLAY:	4
GETTING STARTED:	4
GRAPHICS:	3
SOUND CHECK:	3
VALUE:	4

Mad Dog II may not win any Oscars, but it's a great way to spend some time improving your eye-hand coordination.

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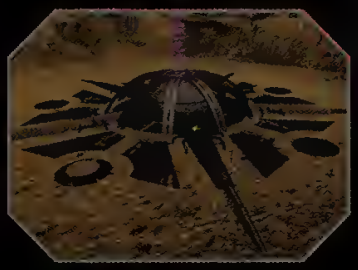
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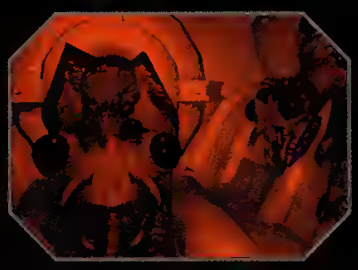
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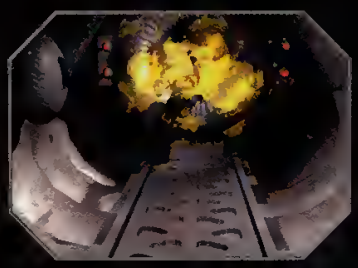
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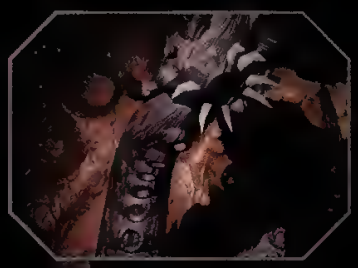






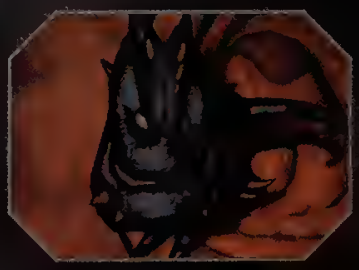


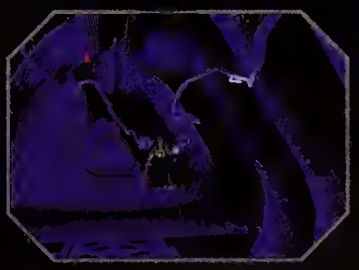




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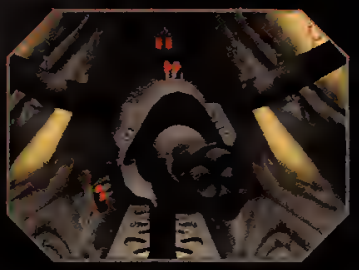
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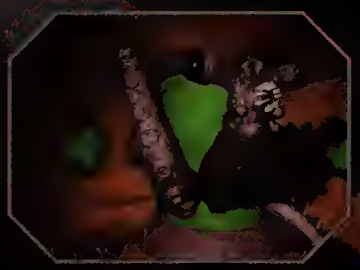






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Or is it one of those really ugly things that we don't even want to mention?



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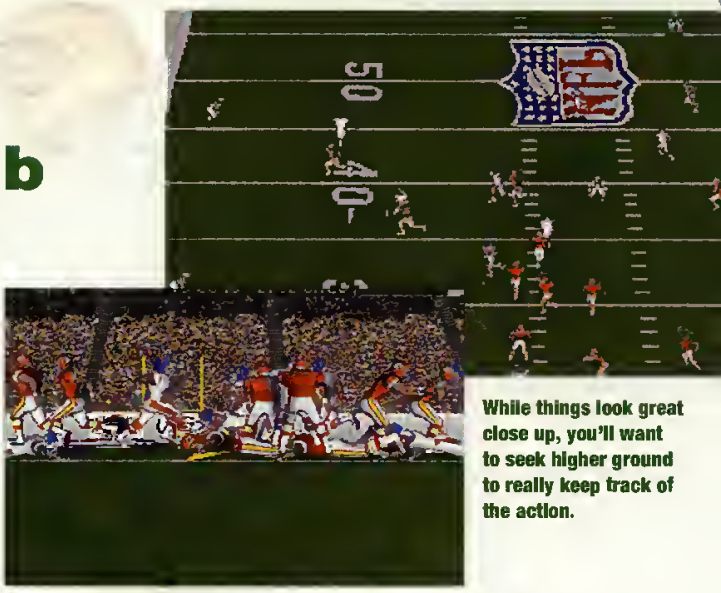
Virgin

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DOS CD

NFL Coaches Club Ultimate Football

By Fredric Paul



While things look great close up, you'll want to seek higher ground to really keep track of the action.



Ultimate Football's options screen gives you several ways to start the action.

NFL Coaches Club Ultimate Football from MicroProse begs an important question: Who do you wanna be?

If you're a casual fan longing to fill the shoes of Emmit Smith high-stepping his way into the end zone, Ultimate Football may not be the game for you. But if you're a serious student of gridiron tactics who dreams of wearing Don Shula's warm-up jacket, Ultimate Football is a terrific coaching simulator. You can direct real teams in simulated action or create ongoing fantasy leagues to truly test your football acumen. You can also choose from hundreds of preset offensive and defensive plays or design your own from scratch.



The play editor lets you get down and dirty in the details of strategy.

Licensed by everybody from the NFL and the NFL Players Association to the NFL Coaches Club and the Franchise Football League (a fantasy football organization), Ultimate Football uses real players, teams, and stats. It lets you build teams from the 1994 NFL rosters, then draft and trade players to strengthen your squad or account for injuries. You can even trounce your rivals in other cities via modem and download updated stats from Prodigy or Fantasy Sports Properties' bulletin-board service. (Prices for online updates range from $80 to $100 a season.)

Ultimate Football requires two book-length manuals to explain its impressive list of features. The 140-page instruction manual covers everything from how to call and create plays to the history of the game. About the only things missing are an index and a quick-start guide. The separate *1994 Fantasy Football Journal* is an almost-300-page tome that details how to set up and run a fantasy football league.

Unlike some football games that switch to separate play-selection and score screens, Ultimate Football's scoreboard is integrated into the stadium, and the play-calling window pops up over the field. The sounds of quarterback signal calling mix with grunts and crunching tackles to add realism, although the stadiums are eerily silent between plays. (MicroProse is working on an update to add ambient sounds.)

The game's three-dimensional graphics look great. You get a wide choice of views, from sideline and end-zone perspectives to a bird's-eye view. Unfortunately, the price you pay for the fancy views is jerky animation, especially with the close-up camera. All the players look alike and move in pretty much the same way, and since they have no numbers on their backs, you can't tell Jerry Rice from Joe Montana. Worse, when several players crash together at the line of scrimmage, it's all too easy to lose track of who's who. That's a drag if you're watching the computer run the play you called, but it's a deal breaker when you're controlling the running back in action mode.

But although fans of instant action may get frustrated, aspiring coaches will love Ultimate Football's great-looking graphics, up-to-date stats, and plentiful features. All it's missing are the inspirational speeches in the locker room. (MicroProse Software; 800-879-7529; DOS CD, $57.95)

PSST!

☞ Pick the right view for the way you want to play. The close-up views are exciting but make it hard to tell what's going on. Ironically, the coach's view works well for the action mode. ☞ Think quickly–the computer isn't shy about calling delay-of-game penalties, and you'll be offsides if your defensive players are still running onto the field when the play starts. ☞ If you're truly dexterous, use a combination of keyboard, mouse, and joystick to control the quarterback with one hand and direct the pass with the other. ☞ The computer's AI tracks what plays you run, and, in certain situations, from what formations you run them. You can fool it by establishing a pattern, then trying something different late in the game. ☞ Pay attention to the coaching messages that appear on the screen. They provide clues as to what the opposing coach is planning. ☞ On offense, watch the positions of the linebackers. They indicate where the defense will attack.

386, 4MB RAM, VGA, MSCDEX 2.1, mouse or joystick

GAME PLAY:	★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★
VALUE:	★★★

Ultimate Football looks great and delivers enough depth to satisfy even the pickiest Tuesday-morning quarterbacks. But the action mode is somewhat confusing and hard to control.

READYSOFT INCORPORATED & EPICENTER INTERACTIVE PRESENT

DON BLUTH'S

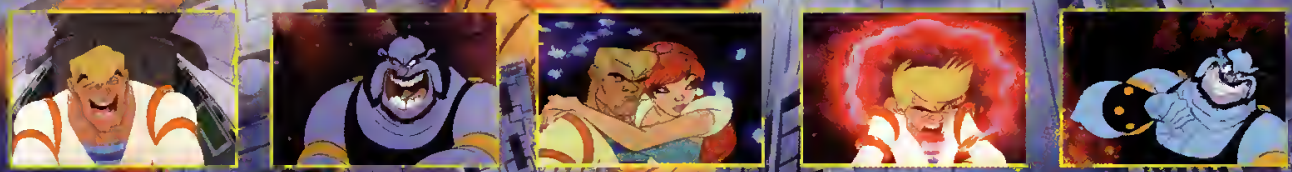
SPACE ACE®

The evil Commander Borf has kidnapped Ace's girlfriend, the beautiful Kimberly, and is plotting to enslave the Earth by means of his dreaded "Infanto Ray", a weapon that changes everyone it blasts into a helpless baby.

Armed only with a laser gun, Ace must seek out and destroy the Infanto Ray, rescue Kimberly and save the Earth. All in a day's work for a superhero, right?

Featuring full screen animation and crisp, powerful sound from the original laser disc arcade classic, Space Ace plunges you into intense, non-stop action. The fate of Earth is in your hands.

NYR™ Not Yet Rated



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Front Page Sports: Baseball '94

By Bill Meyer

Batter up! Front Page Sports: Baseball '94 has stepped out of the dugout—and you won't want to send Dynamix to the showers because of it.

Dynamix licensed the names of all the '94-season players from the Major League Baseball Players Association and created detailed renditions of the major league stadiums. So you can get your fill of Frank Thomas at Wrigley Field or spend time admiring lesser-known ball players on their home turf. One thing you won't find, though, are the real team names because Dynamix didn't license them from major league baseball. Instead, you get some pretty creative substitutes—some funny, others bizarre.



Watch the action from any angle.



Choose your pitch carefully, or it's bye-bye birdy.



Swing! And a miss...

There's a bundle of options for playing a single game or a whole season. Four skill levels let you be speedy player, savvy manager, and crafty owner at the same time—and at your own pace.

At the Advanced level, hitting, pitching, and fielding actions are similar to those of other baseball games on the market. For example, you select swing locations for everything from jamming sliders to drifting curves. It's not easy, and if you're a rookie to this gaming genre, it might take some practice before you earn any batting titles. On the field, the closest player to a hit ball lights up, then it's up to you to chase down the ball and make the appropriate throw. Advanced pitching has several nice features. Not only do you get to choose from a variety of pitches and aiming locations, but you can also adjust the speed of pitches.

If all that sounds too complicated, put the game into Basic mode and just play manager. You decide such things as when to steal, hit and run, squeeze, or hug the left-field foul line against a pull hitter. Off the field, you can build league associations, buy teams, schedule seasons, draft and trade players, claim free agents, monitor the disabled list, manage the pitching staff and bull pen, send aging players out to pasture, and ready the ranks for the long hot summer during the off-season and spring training.

Dynamix decided to go with fast arcade action instead of high-resolution graphics during the fielding play. This trade-off makes the high resolution pitching and hitting screens, look much more detailed—pitchers nod to catchers and batters knock mud off their cleats. In terms of real baseball dynamics and speed, Baseball '94 is great, but if you like detailed stadiums, spectators, and players, it may disappoint.

One final complaint. The game uses real players, but it doesn't endow them with character. Players never show any personal style, like a Willie Mays basket grab or a Ricky Henderson snatch catch. Names and statistics are great, but some more humor and spirit would also help. (Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS, $55.95; DOS CD, $59.95)



Change your lineup to suit the situation.

☞ To get your swing timing and placement down, practice in the batting cage. Learn to recognize different ball spins on breaking balls and heaters. ☞ Check out pitcher ratings so you know what their best pitches and speeds are. ☞ When on the mound, keep your stuff down, especially against power hitters. ☞ Check out batter statistics so you know what to throw to specific players. ☞ Don't be afraid to throw balls. Sometimes, players chase pitches in the dirt just like real major leaguers do. ☞ With a runner on first, set your infield to the double-play position. ☞ If a pitcher and a hitter's combined pull rating is high, move the appropriate outfielder to guard the line. ☞ Do not start pitchers who have only two pitches; use them as closers.

PSST!

386/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, QEMM-386

GAME PLAY: ★★★★

GETTING STARTED: ★★★

GRAPHICS: ★★★

SOUND CHECK: ★★★★

VALUE: ★★★

The players, comprehensive statistics, ability to customize games and seasons, and realistic baseball dynamics make this addition to the league a real winner.



A LINEBACKER BURIES HIS SHOULDER INTO HIS OPPONENT'S CHEST. ANOTHER GUY SLAMS INTO THE LINE LIKE AN 18-WHEELER. AL MICHAELS FEEDS YOU THE UGLY DETAILS. AND IT'S ALL BROUGHT TO YOU COURTESY OF MOTION CAPTURE TECHNOLOGY.

INTRODUCING UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS '95 FOR THE PC. YOU'VE GOT TONS OF IN-YOUR-FACE, HELMETCAM SHOTS. YOU SEE THE ACTION JUST LIKE A BALL CARRIER OR DEFENDER. YOU'VE GOT INFINITYCAM. AND YOU CAN WATCH THE GAME FROM ANYWHERE ON THE FIELD, ANYTIME.

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS '95. IT'S ABOUT FOOTBALL. ABOUT WINNING. AND ABOUT LEAVING THE FIELD UNDER YOUR OWN POWER.

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS '95™

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According To Psycholog
To Exhibit Signs of
Pathologic
and Ant



"If it ain't
broke,
don't fix it."

ISTS, MALCOLM CONTINUES SCHIZOPHRENIA, AL LYING ISOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

Not even Malcolm's smart mouth could save him from prison when Kallak and Brandon set him up for the murders of Kyrandia's king and queen. Now, in part three of this magical trilogy, he's out to even the score on dirty tricks.

Show him how to get even with those royal pains in the butt. Not to mention, killer squirrels. Spell-casting cats. Two-faced pirates. And a nasty fish faced queen.

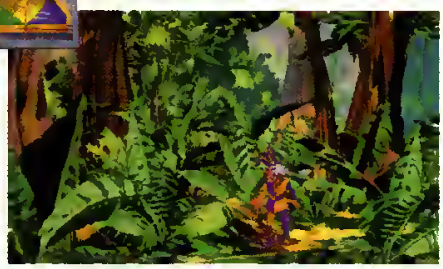
You won't be able to stop laughing–or playing. Unless, of course, the joke's on you.



- With Westwood Studios' new *Moodometer,* you control Malcolm's snide put-downs and wild put-ons. Do you lie, tell the truth, or do stand-up comedy in The Underworld?



- Over 80 brilliant scenes come at you non-stop in mesmerizing 3-D. And like the laughs, the graphics are bigger.
- "No Click" interfacing means you interfere anywhere in Kyrandia just by moving your mouse to the lower screen.



- Ever perform a seance? Make a Fish Cream Sandwich? Turn men into mice? The puzzles are trickier and the magic's crazier in *Kyrandia: Book 3.*
- Our *Supersound* mixes super-weird Kyrandian sound effects and a lively music score.



AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM

Distributed exclusively by Virgin Westwood Studios

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By Christopher Lindquist

'Stick It to 'Em

The joystick's place in the computer-game-controller hierarchy is under attack by that pushy rodent, the mouse. Everyday, more and more games are seeking the Holy Grail of the perfect point-and-click interface.

But some games still play best with a 'stick in your hands. Flying an F-16 just isn't the same if you command all that horsepower by pushing a button or steering a trackball. Fortunately, joystick vendors are coming up with increasingly cool examples of their craft. *Electronic Entertainment* put its fingers on the triggers of five new and upcoming 'sticks that significantly advance the state of the art. Any of these postmodern flight controllers is worth a test flight.



The F-16 FLCS looks cool, in a pricey way.

ThrustMaster F-16 FLCS

ThrustMaster's venerable Flight Control System and Weapons Control System let desktop jet-jockeys two-fist it around the virtual skies, and now the company has added a new 'stick with more tricks than David Copperfield. The F-16 FLCS sports no less than four eight-way "hat" switches, a two-stage trigger, and three fire buttons. It's modeled after the control in a real F-16 Fighting Falcon, but it would be equally at home in Darth Vader's TIE Fighter.

You can customize the programmable 'stick to work with any flight simulator. You'll have to dig deep for this one, though. It carries a list price approaching $200—only serious armchair pilots need apply. (ThrustMaster; 503-639-3200; PC, $199.95)

STD InterAct PC ProPad

The STD InterAct PC ProPad may not look as impressive as its larger cousins, but bigger isn't always better. It's not necessarily the best controller for flying games, but the ProPad is perfect for sports and fast-action games in which quick direction changes can mean the difference between a high score and high blood pressure.

The ProPad features an eight-direction pad, two fire buttons, and a pair of speed controls that let you choose between normal and "rapid fire" modes. At less than $20, it's an affordable addition to any PC game player's arsenal. (STD; 410-785-5661; PC, $19.95)



STD's ProPad is a winner with PC-based sports games.



Advanced Gravis Phoenix

If buttons are your thing, the Advanced Gravis Phoenix is your 'stick. With 24 programmable buttons plus rudder and throttle controls, this futuristic controller does it all. You can customize the controls for your favorite games or use the numerous supplied settings. The Phoenix is as close to the switch-filled cockpit of a real jet fighter as you can get while sitting at your computer. Of course, remembering what all those controls actually do may require a couple of years of flight school.

One other consideration: Our trial run with a prototype (production units aren't due until early 1995) left us feeling that the 'stick was not as comfortable to grip as it should be. In the age of ergonomic design, there's no excuse for sharp corners that bite into forearms. And the lack of a wrist support means that long sessions with the Phoenix could leave your wrists a little raw. So be sure to give it a good try before you buy. (Advanced Gravis; 800-663-8558; PC/Mac, $149.95)

CH Products Virtual Pilot Pro and Pro Pedals

CH Products has been in the joystick game for a long time, using high-quality controllers as its calling card. That reputation means that after 11 years, the company is still numero uno in the flight-yoke department. CH's latest products are the Pro Pedals and the Virtual Pilot Pro, two new toys that should make desktop pilots do barrel rolls.

The Pro Pedals let virtual fliers control the rudders and brakes in such games as

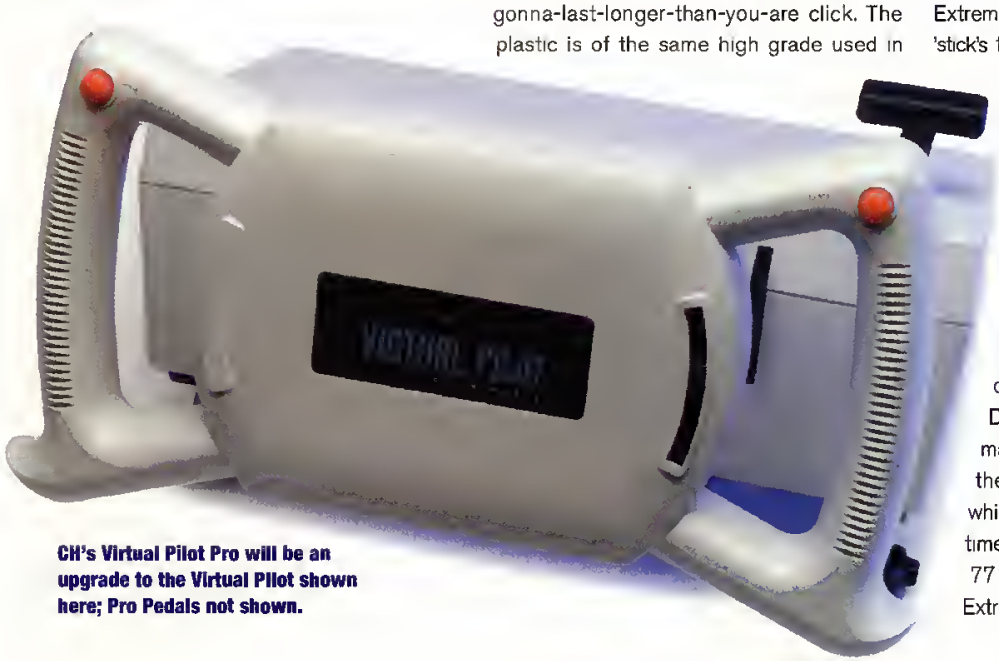
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WEINBERG & CLARK



The Phoenix gives you all the bells, whistles, and buttons you'll ever need.

Microsoft Flight Simulator, adding a level of realism unavailable with just a joystick. The Virtual Pilot Pro is an enhanced version of the company's Virtual Pilot flight yoke (which also doubles as a terrific steering wheel for driving games). Two four-way switches, six fire buttons, elevator and aileron trim controls, and a separate throttle give virtual pilots access to many essential flight-sim features without forcing them to reach for the keyboard.

All this realism doesn't come cheap, though. Buying the complete set of Virtual Pilot Pro products will set you back almost $270. (CH Products; 800-624-5804; PC; Pro Pedals, $139.95; Virtual Pilot Pro, $129.95)



CH's Virtual Pilot Pro will be an upgrade to the Virtual Pilot shown here; Pro Pedals not shown.

Logitech WingMan and WingMan Extreme

If there's one thing Logitech knows, it's how to make products that feel good in your hands. From mice to trackballs to digital cameras, Logitech products share tactile appeal and quality design. Now the innovative company brings its expertise to the joystick market.

The WingMan is a standard two-button-and-throttle joystick in the same way that a Lamborghini Countach is a standard car. This thing just feels right. The buttons (at least on the prototype we tried) give a solid, I'm-gonna-last-longer-than-you-are click. The plastic is of the same high grade used in Logitech's mice and feels like it could survive the punishment of even the most steroid-pumped jet-jock. And the well-designed wrist support should help reduce fatigue during extended gaming sessions.



Logitech looks sharp with the WingMan Extreme.

The WingMan's big brother, the WingMan Extreme, has even more slick features. The 'stick's four buttons and "hat" are ThrustMaster Flight Control System–compatible, which means that the Extreme's extra features will work with many popular games right out of the box.

Sounds great, right? It gets even better: The Extreme's list price is less than $70, and it should sell at a street price of about $50. And the WingMan lists for less than $40. That's a bargain compared with other top-notch sticks on the market. Do yourself a favor—if you're in the market for a flight controller, check out the WingMan and WingMan Extreme, which should be on store shelves by the time you read this. (Logitech; 800-231-7717; PC; WingMan, $39.95; WingMan Extreme, $69.95)



TechShop

By Christopher Lindquist

PC Tune-Up Tips

PCs are getting easier to use, but they're still not foolproof. Even if you own the latest, fastest, most powerful system, you can still run into problems getting your games and multimedia titles to run well—or at all.

That's not news, of course, so game developers spend a lot of time testing (and crashing) their titles before they are shipped. Many companies list common problems and solutions in the game's documentation. If you can't find the help you need there, be prepared to spend some time on hold waiting for tech support.

If, like most people, you want to avoid poorly organized manuals and overworked tech-support reps, there are some basic things you can do to help keep your PC up and running through even the most finicky games. Best of all, they're free.

Memory

If you want to get the most from the memory in your computer, use a memory manager and optimizer. While there are other memory managers you can buy, MS-DOS 6 includes MemMaker, a memory optimizer that can help free up valuable conventional memory (the most important part of your system's RAM). Some games demand almost all of the 640KB of conventional memory and won't work if that space is taken up by other programs or device drivers.

To run MemMaker, type *cd dos*, hit Enter, type *memmaker*, and hit Enter again. Follow the instructions on the screen, and MemMaker will try to load device drivers and the like into upper memory where they won't get in the way of your games. When MemMaker is finished, it will display a comparison of how much conventional memory was available before and after optimization. With any luck, the "after" number will be considerably larger.

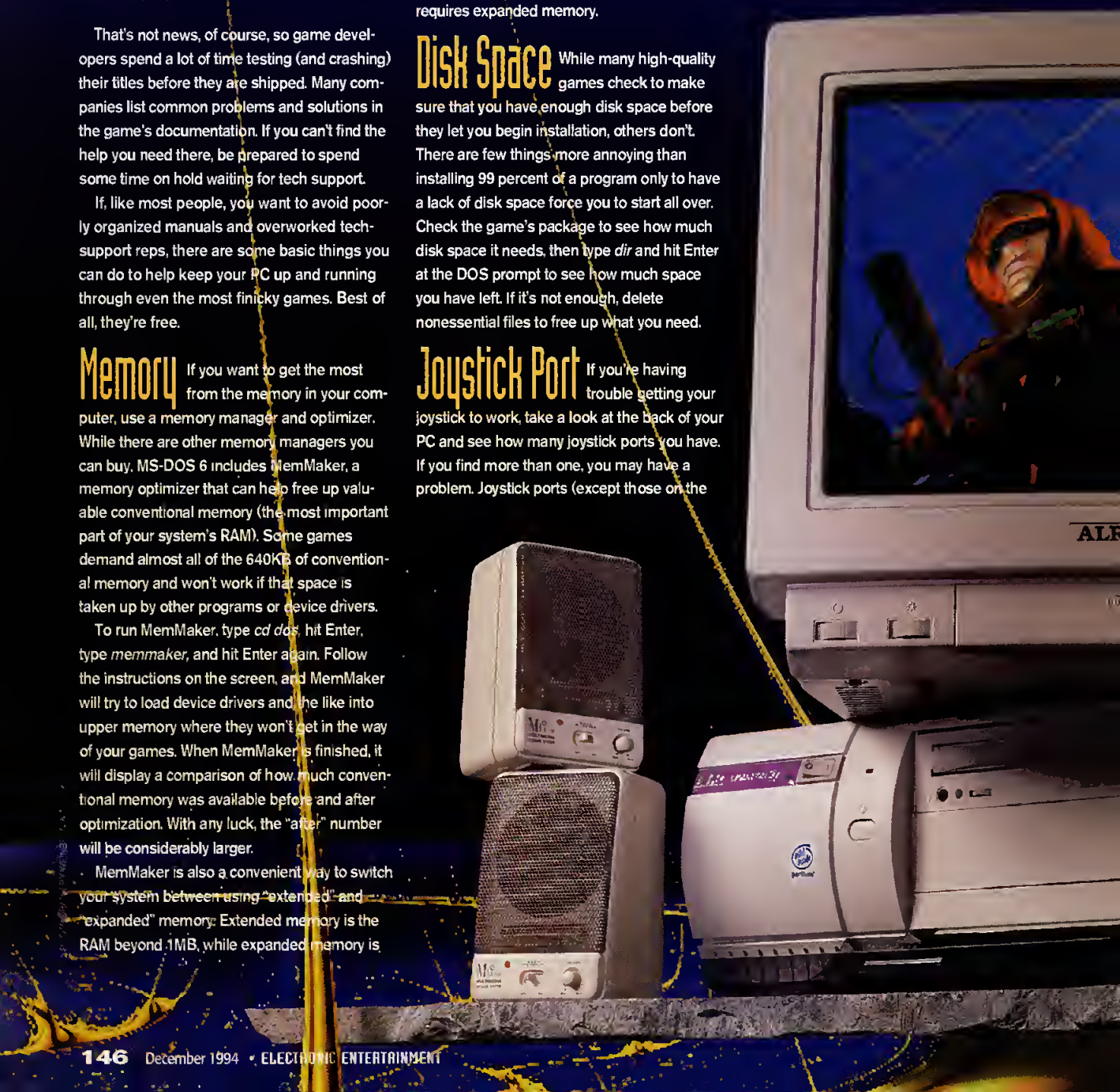
MemMaker is also a convenient way to switch your system between using "extended" and "expanded" memory. Extended memory is the RAM beyond 1MB, while expanded memory is specially configured extended memory. Some games and multimedia titles use extended memory, some use expanded, and some can use both. If you're trying to free up the most conventional memory, try using MemMaker to turn off expanded memory. But you'll have to turn it on again if a particular piece of software requires expanded memory.

Disk Space

While many high-quality games check to make sure that you have enough disk space before they let you begin installation, others don't. There are few things more annoying than installing 99 percent of a program only to have a lack of disk space force you to start all over. Check the game's package to see how much disk space it needs, then type *dir* and hit Enter at the DOS prompt to see how much space you have left. If it's not enough, delete nonessential files to free up what you need.

Joystick Port

If you're having trouble getting your joystick to work, take a look at the back of your PC and see how many joystick ports you have. If you find more than one, you may have a problem. Joystick ports (except those on the same game card) cannot be used simultaneously, and having two or more active ports can cause erratic system behavior. If you bought a PC that came with a built-in joystick port and then added a sound card that has its own joystick port, you'll need to disable one or the other. Check your system and sound-card manuals to see how to turn off the port you don't want to use.



Boot Disk

Everybody needs one of these. A boot disk is a floppy disk that contains the DOS system files and little else. Many game manufacturers suggest you reboot your system using a boot disk to help free up conventional memory and avoid loading pesky device drivers that could interfere with the game.

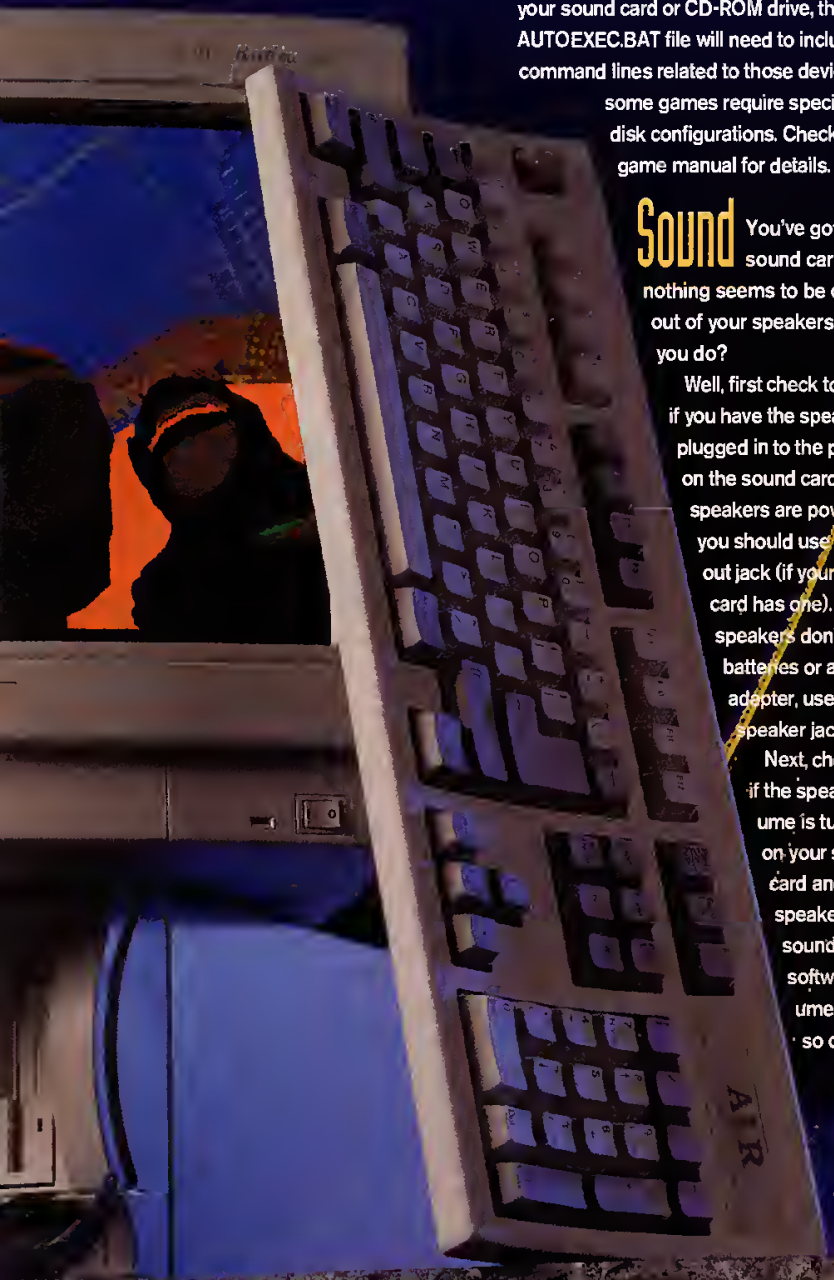
To make a basic boot disk, put a blank floppy into your A: drive and type *format* a: /s, then hit Enter. The floppy will be made into a "bootable" disk. Next, copy your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files to the floppy. You then need to edit the files with DOS's EDIT command to remove all but the most vital lines. A sample CONFIG.SYS file with only the basic memory-management features of DOS might look like this:

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE RAM
DOS=HIGH, UMB
```

And here's a sample AUTOEXEC.BAT file with nothing but the most basic path information and a mouse driver:

```
PATH=C:\;C:\DOS
C:\MOUSE\MOUSE.COM
```

If a particular game needs access to your sound card or CD-ROM drive, the AUTOEXEC.BAT file will need to include any command lines related to those devices. And some games require special boot-disk configurations. Check your game manual for details.



Sound

You've got the sound card, but nothing seems to be coming out of your speakers. What do you do?

Well, first check to see if you have the speakers plugged in to the proper jack on the sound card. If your speakers are powered, you should use the line-out jack (if your sound card has one). If the speakers don't have batteries or an AC adapter, use the speaker jack.

Next, check to see if the speaker volume is turned up on your sound card and on the speakers. Some sound cards use software volume controls, so check in the manual to see how to adjust them.

Finally, make sure that your game is configured to work with your sound card and its settings. While some games automatically detect the sound card, others require you to type in the proper setting numbers. The standard configuration is an IO address of 220, an IRQ of 5 or 7, and a DMA channel of 1. Use your sound card's setup software to determine the settings for your card. Then check the setup program of the game to find out if it is using the same settings. Clipped audio is often the result of an incorrect IRQ setting.

If your sound card is Sound Blaster compatible, you should also have a line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file that looks something like "SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 T1" (your actual numbers may be different). If there's no such line, rerun your sound card's installation software.

Disk Cache

If your machine's performance isn't keeping up with your expectations, consider a disk cache.

Every time your computer has to read data from a disk, things slow down. A disk cache can help prevent disk-caused delays by moving frequently used data into your system's faster RAM. The easiest way to install a disk cache is to use SmartDrive, which comes with MS-DOS. SmartDrive may not be the best cache in the world, but it's certainly adequate—and it's free!

First, check to see if SmartDrive is already installed in your system. Use a text editor or DOS's TYPE command to see if the line C:\DOS\SMARTDRIVE.EXE is in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. If it is, you already have SmartDrive working for you. If it isn't, add the line to the end of the file.

One note: Cautious types might want to make sure they're using SmartDrive version 4.2 (available from Microsoft). With this version you can edit the SMARTDRIVE.EXE line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. Add a space and /X at the end of the SMARTDRIVE.EXE line. This command turns off SmartDrive's write caching, which can improve system performance but may cause problems if you accidently turn off your computer or lose power before SmartDrive has a chance to write its stored data to your hard disk.

TechShop S.O.S.

Protected mode, data compression, and a warning about more upgrades.

Get the Picture?

Is there any way I can take an electronic picture of my game screens so that I can use them as Windows wallpaper? Some of my games have really cool art, and I'd love to show off my high scores.

Robert Liams
Santa Rosa, California

Want to feel like you're playing a game even when you're working, eh? I know where you're coming from.

Yes, many programs let you capture screens from games and multimedia titles so that you can use them as Windows wallpaper. Some are commercial packages that cost $100 or more, but there are also cheaper shareware alternatives, such as Grabber and Screen Thief. You can download both of these programs from online services such as CompuServe and America Online. You can also do a file search on any online service to find similar products. Search for words like *capture, grab,* and *screen* to locate them.

These programs let you load a small "resident" program (meaning it stays in memory even while your game or multimedia title is running) that can take a snapshot of your screen and save it to your hard disk.

Once the screen has been saved, you need to convert it to a .BMP file so that Windows can display it. Paint Shop Pro is another shareware program (also available in many online locations) that lets you convert between most common graphics file formats. As an added bonus, Paint Shop Pro can take screen shots of Windows programs.

Are You Protected?

Most of the games I buy these days say something about "protected mode" before they load. What the heck is protected mode, and why do so many games use it?

Doug Harris
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Unprotected mode would probably be a better description, because when your games use protected mode, they're wandering into an area where DOS was never meant to tread.

Protected mode has been a feature of Intel and Intel-compatible PC processors since the dawn of the 80286 chip. You see, the folks who designed earlier processors such as the 8086 and 8088 didn't envision a time when 1MB of RAM wouldn't be enough to hold an operating system, let alone run a game. But Intel foresaw that later machines would have to use larger amounts of memory, so it started building processors with a protected



mode. In protected mode, an 80286 can keep track of 16MB of RAM, and an 80386 or 80486 can work with as much as 4 gigabytes of memory.

It sounds great, until you remember that DOS was pretty much standardized long before the 80286 chip was a twinkle in Intel's eye. And while newer hardware is more than happy to play around with large chunks of RAM, DOS is still a shrinking violet when it comes to anything more than 1MB. Fortunately, several companies, notably Tenberry Software, have created DOS extenders that let programmers circumvent DOS's limitations, enter protected mode, and use those extra "extended" megabytes.

So when your screen flashes something about protected mode after you start a particular game, it simply means that the game is loading a DOS extender so that your extra memory won't just sit and gather dust.

Compression Question

You always mention this thing called data compression, but you never fully explain what it is. I know it can make my files smaller and give me more room on my disk, but what is it really doing?

Dana Poulson
Fort Worth, Texas

There are almost as many ways to compress data as there is data to compress. (So why Microsoft decided to "borrow" one from Stacker is beyond me.) One of the simplest ways to crunch bits into a smaller space is to assign codes to characters and sets of characters in a file.

Let me give you an oversimplified example: If we wanted to compress the phrase *How now brown cow?* we could assign a code, say 2, to the letter pair *ow*. That way, the phrase could be written as a sort of pseudochemical equation—H2 n2 br2n c2?—making the sentence four letters shorter.

The compression program would also have to tag a "code table" onto the compressed file so that the decompression program would know what letters to put where. My example is really a mockery of the complex algorithms used by such programs as PKZip and Stacker to compress data, but you get the general idea.

Perpetual Upgrades

It has always seemed to me that computer games have compelled users to upgrade their systems. We have added hard drives, sound boards, CD-ROM drives, processor and memory upgrades, and so on. I would

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID POVILAITIS

like to know what computer hardware components you think we will have to upgrade in the future. (This is assuming that we already have the hardware to play any game currently on the market.)

Richard Stukhart
Via America Online

In short: All of them.

Just as taxes expand to fill the available paycheck size and junk mail multiplies to pack the available mailbox space, games and multimedia naturally grow to take advantage of the available system capabilities. This holds true whether you're talking RAM, disk space, processor speed, or anything else.

No matter how fast and powerful the hardware gets, it's only a matter of time before some clever programmer looking for a competitive advantage comes up with a piece of software that demands a little bit more.

In fact, games are some of the worst culprits. You'll be seeing plenty of games that demand a Pentium (or a Sextium or a Septium or whatever Intel comes up with next) long before most business and productivity applications need them. Game developers are trying to re-create an improved version of reality after all, and that takes some serious computing horsepower.

Of course, there are some things you may not have to upgrade as often during the next few years. Sound and picture quality can improve only so much before they pass the human ability to distinguish the difference. But don't bet on reaching even that point before you shell out for a few more upgrades.

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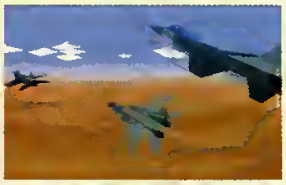
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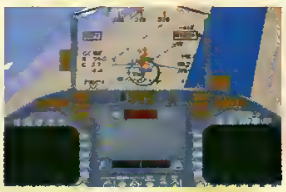
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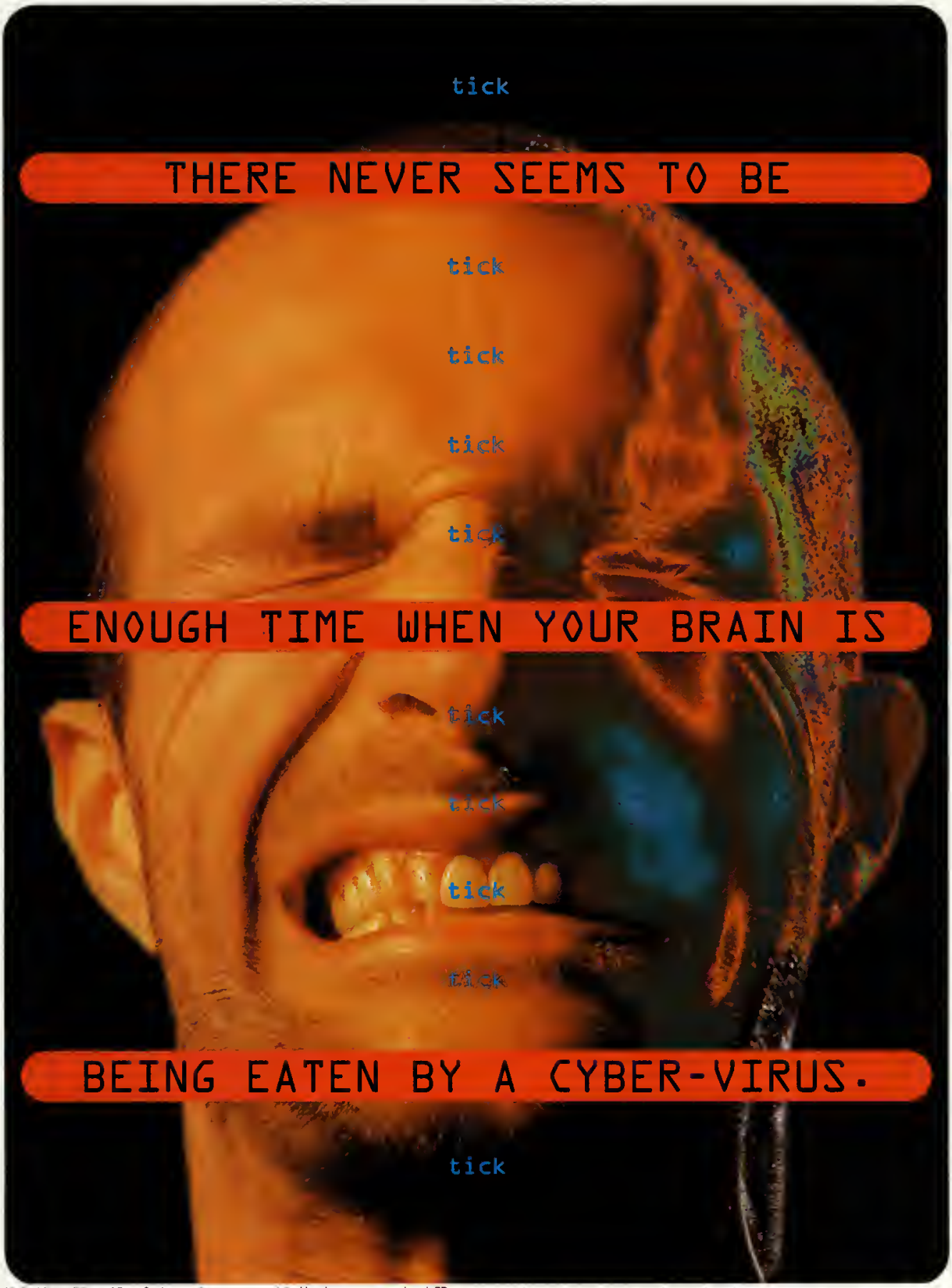




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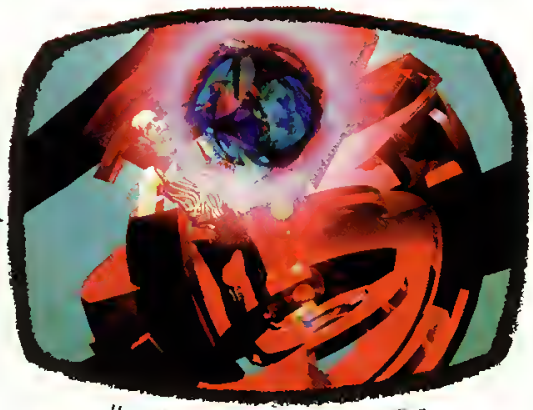


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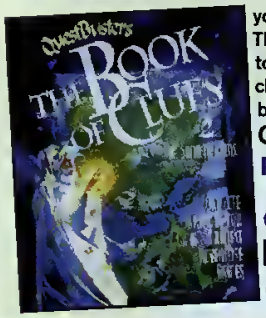
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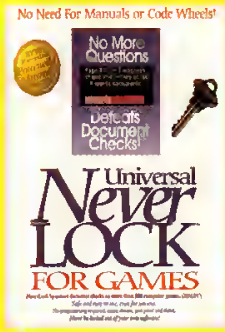
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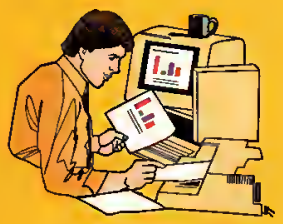
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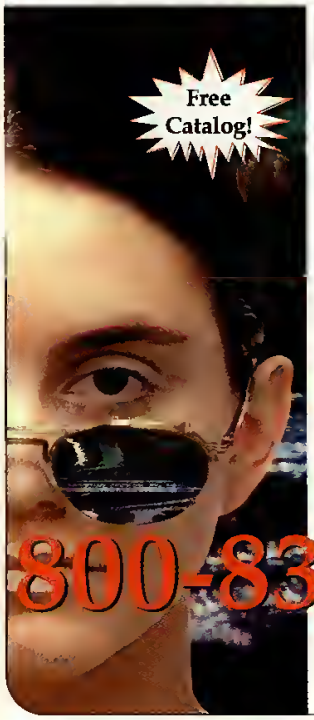
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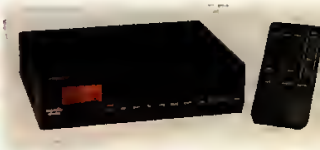
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Beavis & Butthead "Washin' the Oog"	MTV Online	62.4	2,650
F-117 Stealth Fighter	Military City Online	63.3	507
Vicki in skimpy jeans	Graphics & Animation	197.9	7,322
Nikki in thong panties	Graphics & Animation	280.9	6,572

Merger Mania

Computer games are growing so fast that they seem to be threatening to take over the entire software market. We wonder what would happen if games got so big that—like fast-growing corporations acquiring weaker, troubled companies—games "took over" established business software packages and incorporated them. It might look something like this:

Mortal Kombat Acquires Sidekick

Sidekick, no longer a personal datebook and organizer, becomes the name of a peppy new combatant in Shang Tsung's vicious competition. His special move is the ability to kick opponents in the side. Unfortunately, he's even less popular among players than Johnny Cage.

John Madden Football Merges with Windows

Error messages in Windows are now accompanied by a verbal berating from the former Raiders coach. "I don't think you wanted to click that. THAT'S GONNA COST YOU!"

Doom Buys Dut Excel

A portal to hell has been cracked open in your worksheet, and columns of numbers have been recalculated into bloodthirsty demons. You must flee through one cell after another until you find and destroy the mutant formula (with a chain saw).

Tetris Merges with The Norton Utilities

Defragmenting the write-blocks of your hard disk becomes a game of quick reactions as the contents of your disk fall in odd shapes from the top of the screen. For every empty space you leave, you lose 256KB of storage.

Leisure Suit Larry In Deal with WinFax

Click on the fax machine in Larry's hotel room and send off-color, inappropriate sexual advances to colleagues in remote offices.

Myst Takes Dver Novell NetWare

The inclusion of NetWare LAN software results in Myst's most challenging puzzle yet: You must add a printer to the network without either crashing it or transporting users to another dimension.

SimCity and Turbo Tax Join Forces

Now you can cheat on your federal income taxes just by holding down the Shift key and typing *F-U-N-D*. But don't try it too often, or you'll start an earthquake.



ILLUSTRATION BY RICH HARRINGTON

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Of course, it's a Sound Blaster. So it makes all your favorite games and software sound more outrageous than you ever imagined. All this sound technology could cost you thousands. But the new Sound Blaster AWE32 is only $399.* No other sound card comes close. Sound interesting? Visit your local Creative Labs dealer. Or call 1-800-998-5227.

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